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THE PRAYER OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

THE PRAYER OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

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Quod ad Nos pertinet, permittimus, ut praelis committatur opus, cui in linguam vernaculam translato a R. P. D. Ernesto Graf, O.S.B., inscribitur titulus: "THE PRAYER OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS."

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Abbas Gen.

P. Paulus Van Caeter, O.S.B.,
Cons. Sec.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

A TRANSLATOR is little more than the chairman at a public meeting. His business is to introduce the speaker to the audience. This he is expected to do briefly; he is not there to hold the floor, people have come to hear the lecturer.

My task is quickly done: Abbot Cabrol is too well known to need an introduction. It would be difficult to estimate how much liturgical studies owe to this indefatigable worker. The volume here offered to English readers is one of a series entitled: *Collection La Vie Chrétienne*. The translation is made from the sixth French edition.

The learned author gives a list of books at the end of each chapter for further research on the part of the reader. However, in order not to interrupt the text, these have been omitted. The general bibliography at the end of the book should prove quite adequate for all such purposes.

May the book add momentum to the ever-growing liturgical movement amongst us!

S. Mary's Abbey, Buckfast,
Whitmonday, 1930.

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PREFACE

THE earliest period of christianity is a popular study in these days. I am not now speaking of those who go to these sources in order to find arguments for their controversies or their apologetics, but it is a fact that the love of historical studies seems to drive men more and more to an examination of the origins of our institutions. This need not surprise us, for it is there that we generally find the reason and explanation of facts which would otherwise remain insoluble puzzles.

As regards the present subject, it may be said that the story of the origins of christian worship throws much light on the liturgy of to-day, in fact, the liturgy would remain unintelligible but for such studies. When an outsider seeks to understand our ceremonies, such as Mass, Baptism, the dedication of churches, ordination, he sees in them little more than a mixture or juxtaposition of formulas and rites which seem devoid of any vital connexion between them. Such an impression, though a superficial one, is excusable enough, at least as regards the rites just enumerated. In the course of the centuries the Mass, Baptism, ordination, the dedication of a church, have been burdened with additions which are not primitive. The rite of ordination, or the dedication of a church, is the result of a juxtaposition rather than the fusion of two rituals, and as regards Baptism, especially that of adults, rites which were formerly spread over the forty days of Lent are now condensed into one single function.

Are we to conclude that our rites lack unity ? To do so would be a mistake for, as a matter of fact, they do form a living, harmonious whole. If this quality escapes the untrained eye, the fault lies in those accretions which, in a measure, hide their unity. The surest way to discern it is to go back to the beginning. In that era all rites are simple, logical, natural—they form a body whose parts all act in unison. This we hope to make quite clear in this essay. There is yet another motive that compels us to study christian origins. Every epoch of Church history appeals to one who loves the Church, and its saddest periods provide instruction and even edification. But the period that elapsed between the first and the fourth century is assuredly the Church's golden age, the heroic age. Not that even then all was for the best. On this point some people still suffer from strange delusions. Even then poor humanity is seen with its weaknesses, its ambitions and vanities and its incurable folly, but the very conditions under which the Church existed made for a strict control of her new recruits. Even in the third century, whatever Tertullian may say to the contrary, the christians formed—and they were destined to do this up to the peace of Constantine—a minority which, important as it may have been, was nevertheless submerged by the surrounding pagan world.

The christians lived in a hostile world. For a Jew to be converted to christianity meant then, and still means cutting himself off from his race and perhaps running the risk of terrible punishment. For a pagan, the profession of christianity entailed even graver risks, as we learn from the writers of the period, particularly from Tertullian, the most objective of contemporary authors, who puts these difficulties in the fullest light. No wonder that before his admission to membership of the Church, a candidate was submitted to a lengthy probation.

From the peace of the Church, in 312, and during the next few centuries in particular, infant Baptism became the rule. In this way it came about that many found themselves enrolled in the Church without experiencing any great enthusiasm, especially as the rules for the reception of adults became gradually more elastic.

In the fourth century the old disciplinary laws still commanded a half-hearted allegiance, though they were frequently evaded by men who were content to remain catechumens for an indefinite period, following in this the example of Constantine himself. In this way they managed to enjoy most of the advantages to be derived from the profession of christianity, whilst, by putting off until the hour of death the reception of Baptism, they escaped from the duties which this sacrament lays upon us.

The liturgical worship of that first period presents peculiar features. It is characterized, first of all, by an air of discretion, moderation, and simplicity, as well as by an air of dignity that distinguishes the austere and artless fervour of the period. There is nothing sad or gloomy about it. If the pagans dubbed the christians birds of the night, there was no justification for the nickname. As a matter of fact, christianity is essentially a religion of joy, consolation, peace, and optimism. Proofs of this can be seen even in their funeral rites. In those early days the *Alleluia* was sung at funerals, and its suppression is of a later date. Nevertheless conditions of life were insecure and christians were ever the butt of the hatred and jealousy of their neighbours, in whose eyes all their doings were suspect. Constantine's decree marks the beginning of triumph. 'The sun breaks through the storm-clouds,' says Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* X, 1, 8). Quite true! It may be said, in a general way, that the peace of Constantine was like the sudden burst of a tropical summer coming on top of a cold, rainy spring. We cannot help being struck by the fact when we come to the study of the liturgy of the period. In my opinion the fourth century witnessed the greatest liturgical revolution the Church ever went through. It is from that period that we must date most of the great liturgical functions, such as processions, pilgrimages, solemn translations of the relics or bodies of saints, solemn blessings, panegyrics, public festivals and pageants. We need only think of the solemnities attending the council of Nicea, the dedication of the church of Tyre, and the great festivals observed at Jerusalem which Etheria witnessed and described for us about the middle of the same century.

Architecture and religious art also bear witness to this phenomenon ; in fact, on all sides there is growth and development. At Jerusalem, at Rome and elsewhere great basilicas rise from the ground as if by enchantment. The temples of the gods are destroyed or turned into churches, and since nothing succeeds like success, many who up till then had not been able to come to a decision in the matter, now threw themselves into the wide-opened arms of the Church. The Church, on her part, was not slow in sensing a fresh danger. The fourth century witnessed a lowering of the religious and moral standard. Many christians were pagans at heart, whilst others, as we have seen, remained in the catechumenate all through life and put off until their last hour the reception of baptism by which they hoped to wash away their sins.

Yet another circumstance proved favourable to further liturgical developments. Hitherto paganism had been looked upon as a dreaded enemy. Hence care was taken to suppress whatever might have reminded the faithful of the worship they had forsworn, even including such rites as were quite harmless in themselves or could have been justified by the mosaic ritual. This ban included, for instance, the ceremonial use of incense, candles, precious vessels or ornaments, and other objects by which pagan memories but incompletely blotted out might have been revived in the souls of the new converts.

After the peace of Constantine the Church rightly judged that paganism was crushed and dead. Then, in the pompous phraseology of Chateaubriand, ‘ incense, flowers, vessels of gold and silver, lamps, crowns, lights, linen, silk, music, processions, festival days, passed from the altars of the vanquished to the altar of the victor. Paganism attempted to borrow from christianity its dogmas and its ethics ; christianity despoiled paganism of its ornaments.’ (*Etudes historiques*, t. II, p. 101.)

It is even possible that some mistakes were made in this new attitude. Certain it is that the former misgivings concerning pagan rites were largely brushed aside and in this way room was made for fresh liturgical developments. If we bear this fact in mind we shall readily see that a great many changes in the liturgical sphere were bound to follow in the wake of the Constantinian revolution. Before that all-important event christian worship presented very special features, so that it has seemed useful already in this place to point to the causes of the developments that now ensued.

But we must not exaggerate in a matter which divides Catholics and non-Catholics. In consequence, we think, of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century controversies with Protestants, whose assertions appear to-day so exorbitant and often quite unjust to rationalists themselves, men conceived the idea that in the first centuries worship was characterized by a purity and simplicity that made it the worship ‘ in spirit and in truth ’ which, they say, still obtains among certain Protestants. These puritans declare that all they need is a pulpit, a table, and a cup, and so they banish from their churches all images, statues, blessings, anointings, sprinklings with Holy Water, incense, candles, anniversaries, festivals, and other ‘ superfluities ’ of which their purified and perfect souls do not feel the need.

These fine theories have been rudely shaken by a deeper study of the liturgy and by what we learn from written documents and archeological finds of the nineteenth century and of even more recent years. Whatever conception men may form of christian worship, no matter what their wishes may be, it has to be admitted that in the first three centuries it was very different from the pictures conjured up by their imagination. The present essay will establish as an incontrovertible fact that, even though, for reasons already stated, the liturgy has not reached its fullest development, it nevertheless contains the seed of the rites which the fourth century will bring to maturity. It will be seen to bear a striking likeness to what takes place in the churches of the twentieth century and to possess, even previous to the fourth century, all its constituent elements, that is its liturgical cycle, its feasts, its sacraments, blessings, exorcisms, gestures, even its cult of saints and martyrs, and their relics, and the cult of the dead—in a word, all that belongs to what we call christian worship.

All this is no mere boasting over our adversaries ; we do not say these things in order to triumph over discomfited opponents, but in order to induce men of good-will to study the matter and to draw the only logical conclusion.

But should our book fail to convince them, perhaps those who share our faith will find therein fresh reasons to admire the christian liturgy as well as new light upon its mysteries. In this way they may be led to seek in it the food of their piety—such a result would by itself justify our effort.

One word about the method followed in these pages. We were, of course, confronted with the difficulty that faces anyone who studies one of the larger questions of history. One is torn between a desire to insist on details, to support every statement by texts and quotations, and on the other hand, to give a readable text, and to eschew notes as much as possible so as not to stop the reader at every step by references. Those who are at all familiar with this kind of study will understand that, unless one were to write three or four volumes, it was imperative to limit oneself and to confine the number of notes within the narrowest limits possible. This method has serious drawbacks, for it seems to demand from the reader an act of implicit faith in the knowledge, competence, and honesty of the writer. However, we may point to two facts which are a compensation for the disadvantages we mention. The first is that most of the topics here touched upon have been studied in special treatises or in books and articles of dictionaries by conscientious workers who have compiled from all authorities and so justified in advance the assertions here made. Our bibliography refers to these authors, who are our guarantees. The second consideration is that we ourselves in our *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, and Dom Leclercq who has so large a share in its compilation, as well as other collaborators, have treated with the requisite fulness the various subjects which can only be touched upon in these pages. We take for granted that most of our readers, at least those especially interested in such questions, have at hand works of reference in which they may find the justification and discussion of most of our theses.

As a rule the liturgy is not studied from the point of view of apologetics. For Chateaubriand, Huysmans, and others like them, christianity is true because its dogmas and its worship are of transcendent beauty and because it answers to the deepest yearnings of human nature and satisfies its needs.

I would not deny all force to such a line of argumentation, but it is far from being either cogent or conclusive. Apologetics based on feelings may satisfy many, but they cannot be admitted without reservations. The conclusions that flow from our explanations may appear to lend support to the doctrine of immanence, nevertheless they belong to a very different order. To our thinking a study of the liturgy points to the unity, catholicity, apostolicity, and holiness of the Church. Here also we leave it to the sincerity of the reader to draw the right conclusions from the facts set down by us. Our effort has been to state them accurately and sincerely.

INTRODUCTION

FROM the first day after Christ's resurrection, his followers formed themselves into a society, distinct from the Synagogue and called by us the Church. If Catholics know this by the teaching of their faith and the assertions of their creed, those outside the Church might come to a similar conclusion by the sole study of historical documents.

These documents bear witness to the relentless opposition to which, during the whole of his lifetime, the person and teaching of Christ were subjected on the part of the Synagogue and her agents, the scribes, the Pharisees, the chiefs of the priests, and the levites. Of this antipathy, which soon turned to hatred, we find numerous proofs in the gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the epistles of S. Paul and other documents of the first century. The disciples of the Master became the objects of the same hostility and, even in his lifetime, his followers ran the risk of being expelled from the Synagogue. After his death, the first disciples and the Apostles found themselves compelled to sever their connexion with the Synagogue, though they still frequented the temple at the hours of prayer. In Jerusalem, where the first church was established, they had even then their own gatherings and their special services; in a word, they constituted a separate body. The cleavage between Jews and christians became more marked after the year 70 when, at the end of a ruthless war, the destruction of the temple by the Romans drove the Jews into exile.

The separation, however, was not at first deliberate and among the new disciples there was a certain resistance and even a violent reaction. But the current which was sweeping the christians out of the orbit of Judaism was too strong to be checked by obstacles of that kind.

We may add that even if documents were silent, reason would show that the course of events could hardly have been otherwise. It is not difficult to see that the message of Jesus, the gospel of glad tidings, was in opposition to the feelings, the habits, and traditions of the leaders of the Jewish people. The gospel leads above all else to the religious and moral uplifting of the individual, whereas the aspirations of the Jews were mainly political, centring in their liberation from the hated yoke of Rome and the restoration of their former greatness. These two conceptions of the kingdom of God being mutually exclusive, they could not be reconciled—the one naturally excluded the other. The Jews were not slow to grasp this, hence the bitterness of their opposition from the very outset to Christ and to his disciples.

The disciples of Christ seem to have done their best to bring the Jews to a sincere acquiescence in the new gospel. This we gather from the first discourses of S. Peter recorded in the Acts of the Apostles and from numerous texts to be found in the earliest christian literature. Even S. Paul, whom the violence and injustice of his compatriots ended by discouraging, had begun by making advances to them.

If at times christian teachers, such as S. Stephen, or the author of the Epistle of Barnabas, seemingly lost patience and allowed themselves to be dragged into a course of action that must needs widen the gap between them and the Jews, it was because they had been driven to it by the latter's hostility and obstinacy and because they felt convinced that the time for compromise was past.

This all but irreducible opposition is a fact to be constantly borne in mind as we study the beginnings of christian worship, for in this sphere, perhaps even more forcibly, we are driven to the same conclusion. Like the Synagogue the newly founded Church has her worship; her ministers, her meeting-places, her prayers, and her rites. Whatever the one may have borrowed from the other, and notwithstanding certain analogies, they are obviously independent of each other. The Apostles and their first followers at Jerusalem neither rejected nor condemned the Jewish worship; on the contrary, the Acts and the Epistles show them going up to the temple, joining in the prayers and assisting at the services of the Synagogue. S. Paul circumcised his disciple Timothy and he himself underwent purification in the temple according to Jewish ritual (Acts xvi, 3; xxi, 24).

At the same time—and the importance of the fact is evident—the Acts describe the followers of Christ as foregathering in private houses for the purpose of prayer and a common *breaking of the bread.* S. Paul, in his Epistles, bears witness to this practice, for he speaks of special gatherings at which the followers of our Lord pray together, sing sacred hymns, listen to sermons, and take part in a mystic repast in which bread and wine are changed into the flesh and blood of Christ. The Epistle to the Hebrews, the very antiquity of which must be granted even by those who reject its authenticity, describes a form of worship, a priesthood, and a sacrifice of a specifically christian character. The epistles of S. Peter, S. John, S. James, the *Didache* and the apostolic Fathers speak in a like strain: there exists then a christian liturgy, a christian form of worship.

As we draw towards the end of the first century and the middle of the second, these features become more clearly outlined. Catholic worship grows and develops along harmonious and logical lines. There is in it a sequence which cannot be explained except by the existence of a central power quickening, ruling, directing, and expanding the whole movement.

An event of capital importance, and one in which christians cannot fail to see the intervention of Providence, did much to forward this movement. This was the ruthless war provoked in A.D. 70, by Jewish extremists, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, the ruin of the temple and the dispersion of the Jewish people. Such a tragedy must have convinced even those christians who were still strongly in sympathy with Judaism, that henceforth it was idle to dream of carrying out its ritual. All that was now at an end and, with the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, men could not help realizing that a new priesthood, a new worship had taken the place of the mosaic priesthood and ritual.

As a matter of fact, at the close of the first century, the cleavage between Jews and christians became more and more marked. The efforts of the Ebionites and those of certain sympathizers with the Synagogue whom we call 'judaizers,' who would have had the Church dependent on the Synagogue, proved futile.

But this hostility which, on the part of the Jews, was so bitter, causing them to reject with horror whatever recalled the memory of Jesus, was not bilateral, if the word is permissible. With few exceptions, the christians of the first century never anathematized their Jewish past. In the religion of Moses and in the history of the Jews they saw a preparation for the gospel. The discourses of S. Peter and even the epistles of S. Paul were couched, at first, in a conciliatory tone. The Marcionite movement took definite shape only towards the middle of the second century. The first generation of christians treasured all the books of the Jews, that is the books of Moses, the prophets and the psalms. Even the deutero-canonical books were incorporated in the christian canon. They paid reverence to the holy books in the same way as the Jews, looked upon them as the word of God and used them in like fashion, reading and commenting upon them in their assemblies as was done in the Synagogue. The psalms and canticles of the Old Testament were the usual theme of their prayers and, without doubt, they sang them to the same tunes or melodies.

The christian *synaxis* bears an astonishing resemblance to the Synagogue service and is made up of the same elements. The very mould into which their improvised prayers were cast, is borrowed from Jewish worship. Some of the expressions most frequently met with in christian worship, such as *Amen*, *Alleluia*, *Hosanna*, *Pax vobis*, *Dominus vobiscum*—are found in the Old Testament. The typically Jewish formula—*The God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob*—is still found in Origen and other writers. Ablutions, the imposition of hands, the use of oil and incense, certain attitudes at prayer, viz. standing, kneeling, extending the hands, were features of the Mosaic ritual and the two chief christian festivals, Easter and Pentecost, take from the Jewish calendar, if not their meaning, at any rate their name and their place in the course of the year. The form of the litany, of the *anaphora* or preface, of the collect and even that of the doxology is of Jewish origin. The week of seven days, except for the vital change of the Sunday, and the division of the hours of the day into threes, have been borrowed in the same way.

The more one studies the sources of christian worship, the more one discovers such analogies whose appearance will not surprise those who realize the bearing of the political events which we have summarized in this Introduction.[1] These events are of such importance for our subject that we have felt it imperative to set them out fully from the very start, for they explain many things with which we shall have to deal in the sequel.

It may be said, then, in general, that in its prayers, its formulas, its rites, gestures, and attitudes christian worship retained whatever was not in opposition to its tenets. But we must add that, notwithstanding the resistance of judaizing christians, it rejected from the first whatever appeared irreconcilable with its principles, such as circumcision, bloody and unbloody sacrifices, the ceremonial of the temple, festivals of a purely national character, the sabbath, the celebration of the festival of the new moon, and a host of other observances which, to say the least, were mostly useless and at times even dangerous.

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[1] This is the opinion of most critics, such as Duchesne, Warren (notwithstanding some divergence of form), and especially Oesterley whom we shall have to quote more than once.

A much later period witnessed a kind of reversion to early practice, and the liturgy, especially that of Rome from the fifth to the seventh or eighth century, borrowed countless details from the symbolism and the phraseology of the Old Testament. Thus the ordination prayers are studded with allusions to the priesthood of the Old Law ; the Ember days are based on Mosaic customs ; the Ember days of September, in particular, recall the festivals of the month of Tisri and more especially the feast of tabernacles, and the christian calendar finds room for the feasts of the Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Law. However, those analogies of a purely literary or doctrinal character are not to be confounded with those of the first epoch.

If we now return to the early liturgy, we may note that, notwithstanding all these borrowings, christian worship, even at the beginning, does not strike the observer as a mere adaptation, or a mosaic whose elements are taken from all quarters. On the contrary, it has characteristics which, in spite of appearances, denote a real originality which, perhaps, was not sufficiently emphasized by the writers quoted above. This originality is due to a number of circumstances which should be carefully noted. The first and the most important is faith in Christ as the Saviour and Redeemer, the Lord, the Son of God—a faith which forms the essential element and the very substance of christianity.

This faith gave christianity its name. From Χριστος, *Christus*, we get *christianus*, christian. A follower of Christ is a christian, he bears the name of his master, and if it is true, as some would have it, that the name was applied to the disciples of Christ by their enemies, never was title better chosen or more expressive of the reality it describes. A christian holds that Jesus is the Christ, the long-expected Messias; he himself is of Christ, he belongs to Christ, he lives in and through Christ: there are no words which would better express the ties that bind him to Christ. No doubt the coiner of the word did not foresee its subsequent history; in fact, even for a christian, the meaning of the title is inexhaustible, and if it is indeed an enemy that invented the name, he bestowed on his opponents a royal gift.

What is true of the spiritual life of the christians applies equally to their worship. From the first day Jesus occupies in this worship the place that is due to him, that is, the first place.

The religious exercises of the first christians, in the private houses of Jerusalem, are described by the author of the Acts under the name of *fractio panis.* We know the meaning of the words; they point to a re-enacting of the last Supper,—the Eucharistic Supper—at which Christ blessed, consecrated, broke the bread and gave it to his disciples. It would seem that this familiar gesture of blessing and breaking the bread in order to distribute it, a gesture consecrated by the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and that of the transubstantiation at the last Supper, made an ineffaceable impression on the mind of those who witnessed these events, so much so that the words '*breaking of bread*' were long used to describe the most august rite of the christian liturgy, and from that day onwards the Mass becomes the centre towards which gravitates the whole of our christian ritual. Even in those early days the Mass was, for a christian, a mysterious, sublime, and divine rite, the epitome of his beliefs, Jesus Christ sacrificed on the cross, giving himself to be the food of his followers.

Nor is this all. When a Jew or Gentile seeks to become a disciple of Christ, he cannot be enrolled as a member of the new society unless he is first initiated by a rite or sacrament closely linked to the Eucharist, since it prepares and leads up to it—viz. the rite of Baptism. Here also Christ occupies the first place, so much so that the sacrament is sometimes given the inadequate designation of *Baptism of Christ*, or, *Baptism in the name of Christ*—a designation inadequate because it has occasionally obscured the true nature of the sacrament. Though, as we have said, the description is inadequate since, by Christ's own command, Baptism is given *in the name of the Father*, *and of the Son*, *and of the Holy Ghost*, it well marks the place which, for the christians of those days, Christ held in the sacrament of regeneration. If it were necessary, Confirmation, which then followed close on Baptism, would sufficiently demonstrate that in christian ritual Christ is never separated from the Father and the Holy Ghost.

For those destined to be the ministers of the Eucharist, of the word of God, and other sacred functions, there exists the sacrament of Order, administered by the imposition of hands and for which the candidates prepare by prayer and fasting. Other rites are likewise found in this primitive era, such as the anointing with oil after Baptism (Confirmation), the anointing of the sick (Extreme Unction), penance for those who have fallen into sin, matrimony, the washing of feet, the practice of hospitality, and certain ablutions.

In all these rites and prayers Christ is ever present, prompting and operating, so that the expression 'christian worship' is strictly accurate. Even when prayer is addressed to the Father, which is generally the case, it is understood that the Father is before all else and κατ' ἐξοχὴν the eternal Father of the Son who is the

Christ, that is, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all, the Father of whom all paternity is named in heaven and on earth (Eph. iii, 14; iv, 6). Nor is this relationship merely hinted at, it is nearly always explicitly stated, for prayer is addressed to the Father through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master.

More than that, prayer is sometimes addressed to Jesus Christ in the same terms as to the Father. Thus the liturgy confesses from its very beginning the equality of the Father and the Son. Nor is the rôle of the Holy Ghost in our worship less clearly stated, as we shall see later on. Thus the invocation of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost stamps christian prayer with the indelible seal of the Trinity. By itself this would sufficiently distinguish the christian from the Jewish worship.

A last feature which allows of no confusion of christian worship with any other and which gives it originality, is its intensity, its fervour.

We do not deny that in other religions, even pagan ones, among the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Greeks and Romans, prayer was often both eloquent and sincere. We need hardly mention the Jews, whose psalms, now the possession of the christians, are looked upon by all as the most ardent expression of prayer. But christian worship stands out from all other forms of worship, and this characteristic transcendence will not be denied by whosoever examines it seriously: we need only think of the prayers of S. Paul, S. Clement, Origen, Hippolytus, the odes of Solomon, and other christian hymns.

Here we find accents so genuine, so deep, so human and personal yet at the same time so divine, that they must move—and indeed have moved—even the indifferent and the unbeliever. Nor is it less remarkable that this inspiration, like an inheritance, has passed from the first disciples to their successors during the Middle Ages, not to speak of christian prayer in modern times, in the

Imitation, in the works of S. Teresa, those of Pascal, etc. The genius of prayer possessed by the Church during so many successive generations must prove a strong argument in her favour in the hands of her apologists.

Such are, we think, the origins of christian worship, the influences that shaped it, and its borrowings from foreign sources.

Some scholars, more particularly in recent times, beside the influences we have described, have tried to find room for the influence of pagan cults, especially that of the so-called mystery cults, which, according to them, was of such a nature that it would in itself account for christian worship.

The prolonged and patient researches of these critics have led to the discovery of a few facts and contain analogies of names and rites which, at first sight, may make some impression. Let us add that the impression is usually the more deep according as those who receive it are less informed on those questions or have made but a superficial study of them. When one goes to the bottom of the matter, the differences become evident and all is explained, for the most part, by purely fortuitous coincidences or unimportant borrowings. Nevertheless, in view of the fact that the question has been discussed with so much insistance, and at times with so much heat, we shall discuss it in an appendix.

Very different, though related to it, is the question of Greek influences. When the infant Church broke away from Jerusalem and the narrow Palestinian circle, she set out on her mission of conquering the world. Antioch, Corinth, Athens, Ephesus, Thessalonica, Alexandria, Rome, and in all probability Carthage and a few cities of Africa became centres of apostolic preaching. Freed from the Jewish restraints which made themselves felt at Jerusalem and in Palestine, the Church, on the morrow of her birth, finds herself in touch with hellenism. All the canonical books of the New Testament are in the Greek idiom, the one or two exceptions being merely hypothetical. The christian writings which influenced the new society up to about the middle of the third century are also in Greek. This accounts for the many Greek words in the vocabulary of the liturgy, such at *Eucharist*, *Euchologium*, *epiclesis*, *litany*, *exorcism*, *acolyte*, *deacon*, *doxology*, *exomologesis*, etc. This influence, which Church historians should note from the social, and even the philosophical and theological standpoint, is of minor importance from the liturgical point of view, and cannot be set beside the influence exercised by the Mosaic religion.

This brief outline which, if we may say so, is the fruit of prolonged and detailed studies, will enable the reader even now to form an opinion on the question as a whole. The chapters that follow will be little more than a development of these premisses.

THE PRAYER OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

CHAPTER I

THE CHRISTIAN DAY, WEEK, YEAR—FEASTS, VIGILS, FASTS, HOLY WEEK, PLACES OF WORSHIP

AT present, for those specially given to prayer, the christian day is divided into periods of three hours each, according to the following plan :

Prime	6 A.M.
Terce	9 A.M.
Sext	Noon
None	3 P.M.
Vespers	6 P.M.

Night is divided into three sections : *Compline*, roughly corresponding to 9 p.m. ; *Matins*, that is, the prayer of the middle of the night ; *Lauds*, the prayer of the hour of dawn ; or, if we preserve the old division of the night still found in the Office, we have :

1st Nocturn	9 P.M.
2nd Nocturn	Midnight
3rd Nocturn	3 A.M.[1]

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[1] To account for the perfect agreement of the Office with this division into threes, it should be noted that Prime and Compline are additions of a later age, hence Lauds were said at 6 a.m. On the other hand the division of Matins into three Nocturns at no time corresponded exactly to the real divisions of the night.

This division is of great antiquity since it tallies with the Roman division of the day and the night and was adopted even by the Jews, for in the New Testament mention is made of Terce, Sext and None, or the third, sixth, ninth hour, etc. But as regards the Church's official prayer this division of the hours became universal only from the fourth century onwards. In the primitive era it was held that a christian's whole day should be given to prayer, without interruption or division of hours. Christ, indeed, withdrew at times in order to pray in solitude. He recollected himself and prayed before some of his miracles ; forty days were spent in the wilderness, in prayer and fasting : he prayed in his agony, but he determined neither time nor place for prayer ; on the contrary, he exhorts his followers to pray always and not to grow weary in so doing. His own life was lived in closest union with his Father, so that it was really one long prayer. Such was the example he left to his followers.

Already in the Old Testament some of the prophets foretold a more universal, more perfect and purer worship than that of the temple—one that should unite all mankind. Thus Stephen the deacon quotes Isaias in order to remind his Jewish hearers that God dwells not in buildings of stone, and S. John declares that God is a spirit and that the worshippers he seeks are those who adore him in spirit and in truth, that is, in their hearts, everywhere and at all times. S. Paul emphasizes the same truth : 'Always pray, giving thanks always and for all in the name of the Lord' (1 Thess. v, 17 ; Eph. v, 20). Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian and the other writers of that period, do no more than repeat this teaching when they exhort christians to pray at all times and in all places. They urge the sanctification of all the actions of the day by prayer or at least by the sign of the cross or the invocation of the name of Jesus Christ. However, such rules, which are still obeyed to-day by the christian true to his calling, only concern a man's private life, for as regards public prayer, it was felt from the first that certain fixed hours must be set apart for its celebration.

The Acts, which show the Apostles going up to the temple for the prayer of the third or ninth hour, give no clue as regards the hour of the meetings in private houses. But it would seem that the middle of the night soon became the usual hour, no doubt because most of the early believers were engaged in manual tasks and had no leisure in the daytime. At a later period, when the persecution raged, the gathering by night became a necessity, and lastly,—and this was a mystical consideration often referred to—the middle of the night was believed to be the hour of our Lord's second coming which it behoved his followers to await in prayer.

However this may be, the custom of nocturnal gatherings became established at an early date, hence their name *vigil* (night-watch) which they bore at first, a name still in use, though its meaning has been modified to designate the day before a feast.

Similar needs and fear of persecution did not at first allow of any gatherings except in private houses, or in a room specially set apart for that purpose. At Rome and in some other towns certain disused sand-pits and stone quarries on the outskirts of the city offered the christians the surest guarantee of safety, hence they are described to us as returning furtively along the Roman roads, in the early hours of the morning, after the meeting, and so evading both the curiosity of the police and the suspicion of the mob. What is more, neither Doctors nor apologists seem to worry over the absence of churches: 'We have no temples, but we have the dome of heaven, and God dwells not in temples built by the hand of man.' However, the statement is not quite accurate, for already then there were certain places and, in some provinces, certain buildings definitely set apart for divine worship. What was meant was that the christians had no temples which could even remotely vie with the many and often magnificent edifices which Rome, Athens, Corinth, Alexandria, Ephesus had erected for the service of the gods. As a matter of fact the time came, long before the peace of Constantine, when even in Rome itself the christians were able to own churches in which to carry out their worship.

Originally all hours of the day were hours of prayer. In like manner all days were days of prayer, or, as they were subsequently to be called, *feriæ*, feast days. S. Paul admonishes the faithful to refrain from the observance of Jewish festivals, the sabbath and the new moon. (Col. ii, 16, and probably Rom. xiv, 5.) Clement of Alexandria and Origen assure them that for a christian every day is a feast day. Nevertheless already at that early period, and from the end of the first century, two days of the week were given paramount importance, viz. Wednesday and Friday. Both days were fast days, when the *synaxis*, or meeting, took place and the Eucharist was celebrated. Such a day was called *Statio*, a word doubtless borrowed from the army and designating the day when the Roman soldier was on duty.

Why these two days? Probably by way of reaction against the Jews, who fasted on Monday and Thursday, and because Friday is the day of our Lord's death and Wednesday that on which he was betrayed by Judas. Allusions to the practice are found already in the *Didache*, Hermas, and Tertullian. But long before either Wednesday or Friday, Sunday is the holy day, the great day when the faithful gather for the celebration of the Eucharist. Sunday took the place of the Jewish Sabbath. This change must be stressed, for it is one of the most important facts in the history of the primitive liturgy and even in the life of the christian community. More than any other occurrence, the change marks the cleavage between Jews and christians, between the former and the new society, between the Church and the Synagogue. In a certain sense it upsets the order of the week and shifts its axis. The Sabbath was the seventh day of the week and its climax; the day on which God himself rested after the six days of creation and for that reason set apart for man's repose also. Christianity changed all this. Henceforth the day following the Sabbath, the first day of creation, becomes the Lord's day, that is, Christ's day, *the* day, in fact, replacing the Sabbath and becoming the first day of the week. In the christian week Monday is the second feria, Tuesday the third, and so forth, until Saturday, the seventh feria, which, however, retains its name, Saturday, *Sabbatum.* It was no doubt in consequence of the memories clinging to it that the dispossessed day secured certain privileges, more particularly in the East, where it was observed as a feast day. At Rome, on the other hand, it was looked upon as a day of penance and fasting, in the same way as Wednesday and Friday, and that old Roman institution, the Ember days, puts Saturday on the same footing as Wednesday and Friday.

Thus we get the christian week. Like the week of the Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans, and in accordance with what had been observed by Egypt and Babylon and the oldest peoples, our week consists of seven days, but its character is essentially christian by reason of the Sunday, on which it hinges, and Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday which are days specially set apart for prayer.

It may not be amiss to take this occasion to point out that even now fasting is closely linked to the liturgy. We have seen that it is so in the case of Wednesday and Friday, which are days of fast as well as days on which the Eucharist was celebrated. It also holds good as regards the Saturday before Easter and generally in respect to Lent in its earliest stages, and all vigils.

The festivals, once they were established, shed fresh lustre upon the Sunday and gave a new consecration to the christian week. The oldest and most solemn festivals of the year were fixed for Sunday, and at an early period certain weeks, above all the week before and after Easter, become weeks of special liturgical importance, that is *Octaves*, to call them by the name they were eventually to receive.

In the whole of this process, then, the week comes before the liturgical year and it may well be that the Sunday is the first germ of its institution. Sunday is the memory of Christ's resurrection, a weekly Easter. This weekly Easter was observed probably before men thought of celebrating an annual one. Pentecost is closely linked to Easter—it follows the latter at an interval of fifty days and each of them depends on the other. They are the oldest feasts of the christian cycle and Tertullian and Origen speak of them as long-established.

The middle of the second century saw the beginning of a controversy concerning the feast of Easter. In Asia especially, where they sought to justify their conduct by the authority of S. John, there were those who kept the Paschal feast on the fourteenth day of the March new moon, its Jewish date; others—and they were far more numerous—fixed the feast for the Sunday following the fourteenth day after the new moon. Thus the former kept Easter on the same day as the Jews and so judaized or seemed to judaize. They also observed the feast on any day of the week, whereas the other party invariably kept it on Sunday, a procedure that was both more logical and more in accordance with history. It also gave the Sunday an added solemnity.

At the end of prolonged controversies between East and West, the Roman tradition prevailed and imposed itself on the whole Church. Thus was laid down the basis of the calendar of the christian year which rests on the Easter festival. For calculating the fourteenth day after the new moon of March the Church was long dependent on the Jews who were wont to fix the date by means of astronomical calculations which, as a matter of fact, happened to be inaccurate, until the time when the Church of Alexandria also had its astronomers who worked out the date and were commissioned to make it known to the universal Church.

In connexion with the feast of Easter we have mentioned that of Pentecost which, like the former, corresponds also to a Jewish festival, viz. the feast of the weeks, that is, the seven weeks after Easter, or that of the harvest. It commemorated the giving of the Law on Sinai. But like Easter, Pentecost bears an essentially christian significance, for it is the anniversary of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, in the upper room, at Jerusalem. As its etymology implies (πεντεκοστή—fiftieth) it falls fifty days after Easter and, like that feast, it is always kept on a Sunday, so that the date of Easter necessarily determines that of Pentecost. These fifty days already form a kind of liturgical season, and as it were one long festival or series of holy days, a period full of joy when fasting is in abeyance, when the *Alleluia* is constantly repeated and when we do not kneel but pray standing as on Sunday.

When Tertullian compares our festivals to those of the pagans, he tells the christians that they need not envy the latter, and he points in particular to these fifty days of gladness which are one long festival stretching from the day of the Resurrection to that of Pentecost, when the risen Saviour dwells in the midst of his followers. At the period now under consideration the Ascension even, which falls on the fortieth day after Easter and marks our Lord's ascent into heaven, is not yet honoured by a special feast day but is merged in the solemnity of Pentecost.[1]

Whilst annexing the feast of Pentecost, Easter likewise exercises an attraction in another direction. The Saturday, Friday, and Thursday which precede the Resurrection are from that time onward days of preparation for the festival and days of fasting, in fact it may be said that the feast of Easter then included the Friday and the Sunday; Friday, the day on which our Lord died, is the *Pasch of the Crucifixion* and Sunday *the Pasch of the Resurrection.* The preceding Sunday, the forty days of Lent, and, at a yet later period, the Sundays of Quinquagesima, Sexagesima, and Septuagesima are likewise caught in the orbit of Easter, whereas, on the other hand, the Sundays after Pentecost are dominated by that feast. However, this organization only became complete at a later period than the one we are now studying. By way of completing the liturgical year, the space left vacant between the two extreme points which we have fixed for the attraction of the feast of Easter is occupied by another solemnity which, in all probability, is not older than the fourth century and likewise seems to have been affected by the feast of Easter. The feast of Christmas first fixed, in the East, for January 6 is attached, in the West, to December 25. This momentous date was the feast of *sol invictus* in the Roman civil calendar and marked the winter solstice. Archeologists do not agree on the reasons for the incidence of Christmas or the solemnity of the birth of our Lord on December 25. We need not discuss the matter now since the question does not belong to the period at present under examination; we will only say that December 25 depends on March 25, a date of paramount importance in the christian year. Since it is the date of our Lord's conception it necessarily demands, nine months later, that of his birth. An opinion also prevailed then that the world was created on that day and that it was the date of Christ's death, hence we find the following item in an ancient Christian calendar: '25 March, Spring equinox, the world's first day, day on which the Lord was conceived and on which he suffered.'[1] Originally *the Pasch of the Crucifixion* was observed at that date in some places.

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[1] It is so at least at Jerusalem at the time of Etheria and, in my opinion, this is the only possible explanation of the passage in her *Peregrinatio*. Cf. my book entitled *Les Eglises de Jérusalem au IV*^{e} *siècle*, p. 124.

Whilst the West affixed the feast of the Nativity to December 25, the East kept it on January 6, even as late as the fourth century. On that date likewise, the East celebrated, from time immemorial, the anniversary of our Lord's baptism in the Jordan. This feast is vouched for by some of the earliest documents. Happily the diversity of dates of the commemoration of Christ's birth did not lead to a recrudescence of the wearisome controversies which raged so long round the date of Easter. An amicable settlement was arrived at—each feast kept its respective place and its share of the memories of the birth of the Lord. December 25 remained Christmas Day and January 6 became the feast of the Epiphany or the commemoration of the Wise Men's visit to the Saviour, as well as that of his baptism and the marriage feast of Cana.

In this way, step by step, the Church's year took shape. In the *Constitutiones Apostolicæ*, a document finally drawn up in the fourth century but comprising elements of an earlier period, we find the following feasts: Christmas, the Epiphany, Lent (viz. one week before Easter), Easter, Low Sunday (*Quasimodo* or *in Albis*) Eastertide, the Ascension, Pentecost, all Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. The observance of most of these days is vouched for by documents prior to the council of Nicea.

Just as the christian week kept the pagan denominations of the days, so, by a similar compromise, the christian year, notwithstanding all its festivals consecrated by the memories of Christ, retained the pagan names of January, February, March, and so forth.

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[1] 25 *Martii, VIII Kal. Apr. Equinoxis verni et dies mundi primus, in quo die dominus et conceptus et passus est.* Cf. my article, *Fêtes*, D.A.C.L., col. 1429. May we state once for all that these initials, D.A.C.L., designate our *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*?

It should be noted that the year is a solar year, though the lunar year followed by the Jews is not without influence on the christian calendar. This applies in particular to the feast of Easter, the date of which is fixed by the lunar year (viz. the Sunday after the fourteenth day of the new moon of March) and to the calendars and martyrologies the compilation of which began in the fourth century and which are still dated by the cycles of the moon.

Another important element of the christian year in the period with which we are dealing is the anniversary of the death of the martyrs—their birthday, *natalis dies*, according to the beautiful expression then in use—a date carefully treasured and observed as a festival and a day of *vigil* at their tomb. The word *vigil*, taken as it then was, in its literal meaning, designates not the day preceding a feast, as it does to-day, but the festival itself, that is the *watch*, so called because, for reasons already enumerated, it took place at night, whether it began at midnight and ended at dawn, or whether it began in the evening and lasted throughout the night, to end at dawn with the celebration of Mass, as on the night before Easter. In the latter case we have the παννυχίς—viz. a whole night's watch.

These vigils held an important place in the liturgy: there were vigils for the martyrs and vigils for the dead. The latter were celebrated in the cemeteries or over the tombs of the martyrs. At times they included a meal which was, under another form, a survival of the *agape* or love-feast. Archeology has discovered certain *triclinia* or dining-halls destined for these repasts.

Abuses soon crept into this observance, more particularly from the fourth century onward, that is, at a period when great numbers of pagans embraced the faith. Many of these entered the Church without the guarantees formerly required and brought with them some of their old evil habits. Things came to such a pass that S. Jerome warned a christian matron not to let her daughter attend these vigils alone. In the end ecclesiastical authority felt compelled to intervene.

On the whole feasts are still few in number. In the fourth century their number grows and to the martyrs are added the *confessors* who, like S. Martin or S. Ambrose, received even in their lifetime honours such as were paid to the saints. At Rome, the starting-point of all great liturgical initiatives, liturgists are at work, one of the results of their labours being the famous calendar of Philocalus, probably the first essay of the kind and destined to form the basis of every calendar and martyrology of the Middle Ages.

Archeologists and historians naturally ask where did these gatherings take place and what were the first christian places of worship. The Gospel tells us that for the institution of the Eucharist our Lord chose a spacious, well-furnished room, in fact a lofty hall, such as were to be found in the houses of the well-to-do. This *cœnaculum* where the last Supper was celebrated would of course remain a hallowed spot for the christians of Jerusalem. Here the apostles and disciples, to the number of 120, were gathered on the day of Pentecost, and S. Epiphanius tells us that the room was subsequently turned into a church. From the Acts we learn that the apostles continued to go up to the temple at the hours of prayer but that there were likewise gatherings in private houses for prayer and the breaking of bread. The meeting at Troas described in Acts xx, 15 ff., took place in the night from Saturday to Sunday, in an upper room, styled *cœnaculum*, situate on the third floor and lit by many lamps. It was the place set apart for the breaking of bread. At Rome two wealthy merchants, Aquila and Priscilla, lend their dwelling for the assembly of the faithful. Elsewhere also S. Paul speaks of private houses (1 Cor. xvi, 19; Col. iv, 15; Philem. 2).

At Iconium, according to the Acts of Thecla, S. Paul held meetings in a private house, and according to the *Recognitiones* S. Peter acted similarly at Antioch. The dialogue of Philopatris, whatever its authorship may be, also speaks of a christian assembly, held on an upper floor of a wealthy house, for fear of the persecutors. A similar incident is mentioned in the Acts of the martyr S. Justus. The oldest presbyteral titles of Rome, S. Prisca on the Aventine, S. Cecilia in the Trastevere, San Clemente, are all erected on the site of private houses. These houses, large and spacious like most private houses in Rome, with their vestibule or ante-room, their *atrium* or inner court flanked by porticoes, their triclinium or dining-hall, were easily adapted to liturgical requirements; in fact they were practically on the plan of the Roman basilica, and the christian basilica preserves their dispositions with but few alterations.

It is, however, certain that apart from these private houses there existed, even before the peace of the Church, churches properly so called, more particularly in the East, in Syria and Phrygia where christianity enjoyed prolonged spells of prosperity and peace. Archeologists have endeavoured to ascertain their number: here we can only refer the reader to their works. A curious incident reveals the existence of a church in Rome itself, under Alexander Severus (222–235). It appears that a quarrel arose between the christian community of Rome and the fraternity of innkeepers. The latter laid claim to certain premises in which the christians practised their worship. The emperor, who as a matter of fact was uniformly fair to the latter, issued a decree granting them the ownership of the premises, adding that it was better that God should be worshipped on that spot in any way whatever, rather than that it should come into the hands of the innkeepers.[1] This incident occurred under Pope Calixtus, and some have sought to identify the spot with the *taberna meritoria* situate near the *Porta Portese*, in that part of the Trastevere where we find the *titulus Callixti.* The point is debatable, but what is incontestable—and this is the point for us—is the existence in Rome, at the beginning of the third century, of a church of which the authorities had full knowledge. Even during the era of persecution the cemeteries were fairly safe places for christian gatherings and any interference with this freedom would be an exceptional occurrence.

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[1] Cf. *Dictionnaire d'arch. et de lit.*, "Cabaretiers."

An edict of 259 or 260 establishes the distinction between cemeteries and buildings set apart for worship. Speaking of a period prior to that of Constantine, S. Optatus mentions forty-eight christian basilicas in Rome (*De schism. Donat.* 1, II, 4, P.L., t. XI, col, 954) and that emperor ordered the restitution to the christians of the edifices confiscated during the persecutions.

The question has been asked whether synagogues were at any time turned into churches. We know that the apostles, and S. Paul in particular, began by preaching in the synagogues where, at times, they met with a welcome, and there is the famous instance of one of the largest synagogues of Antioch being turned into a church, though this happened long after the peace of the Church. No text allows of an answer in the affirmative for an earlier period; for such a change to take place the wholesale conversion of the members of a synagogue would have been required, but an event of this kind never happened. Both the word synagogue and the thing represented by it always remained distinctively Jewish. We know of one instance only where the word designates a christian assembly; everywhere else the Greek word *ἐκκλησία,* gathering, is in use.[1]

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[1] Cf. *Monumenta Ecclesiæ Liturgica*, Præf. p. xi., and D.A.C.L. *Eglises*, col. 2238.

CHAPTER II

THE EUCHARIST—THE MASS

THE Mass is the heart of christian worship. Even an outsider, studying our liturgy—if he is endowed with some power of observation—can hardly fail to realize it. A Catholic church is built, it would seem, all around the altar and for the altar which occupies a central position and is the cynosure of all eyes. The pillars of the sanctuary, the transepts, the nave and aisles, the very sacristy are seen to depend on the altar and are disposed so as to put it in full relief. On Sunday, it is the Mass that brings together all the faithful. In some countries it is the only element of a one-time intense religious life to have resisted the universal process of de-christianization. It is the Mass which still makes of the Sunday a popular holiday.

There is hardly a liturgical act of some importance which is not linked to the Mass or even, so to speak, wedged into it. Ordinations, dedications, the blessing of the baptismal font, that of the holy oils, of candles and palms, religious professions, the crowning of kings, Matrimony, and in former times Baptism—all centre in the Mass.

This is a first impression and it is correct, and history bears it out.

The Mass records and reproduces the drama enacted between Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday, the phases or episodes of which are the institution of the Eucharist and the Passion and Death and Resurrection of

Christ, to which must be joined the Ascension and even Pentecost.

All liturgies bear witness to this. In the very midst of the rites of the Mass they tell us that '*Christ, on the eve of his death, blessed and consecrated bread and wine, changing them into his body and blood and commanding his apostles to do as he had done, in memory of him. Wherefore, we, his servants, and the whole faithful people, in memory of his passion, death, resurrection and ascension, offer to God the Father this pure and holy sacrifice.*' Here we have summed up in one prayer the entire cycle of the great mysteries of our religion. The christians of those early days attached such importance to these memories and anniversaries that the whole of their worship gravitated towards them or was attracted to them. Each day they met in private houses for prayer and the breaking of bread, that is, for the celebration of the Eucharist. This act constituted by itself alone the great bond of union that linked them to one another and to Christ. This supreme and divine act is the germ of all christian worship. Before there was a liturgical year, even before the liturgical week, that is, previous to the institution of the Sunday, the Mass existed. Hence, for the church of Jerusalem, characterized by such fervour that it constituted an ideal that many devout souls longed to reproduce, each day stood for the whole liturgical year; every day was a feast day, a *feria;* every day might have been called a Sunday. Such, at any rate, is the picture we get in the epistles of S. Paul and the Acts of the Apostles.

It was in the nature of things that such a state of affairs could not last for ever. When the Church spread beyond the walls of Jerusalem, drawing her recruits from the ranks of the workers and even the slaves who were perforce compelled to work every day, there could be no question of the daily gatherings to which Jerusalem was accustomed. For a time the conditions that obtained in the church of the holy city remained unique and it became imperative for the other churches to help by their alms 'the poor and the saints' of the Mother church whose energies seemed wholly absorbed in the life of prayer they had chosen for themselves. As regards the other churches, subject as they were to the economics that rule the world, they had perforce to content themselves with the Sunday, and subsequently with Wednesday and Friday also, as their days of public prayer and religious assembly. From this institution of the christian week there must have sprung, at an early date, the idea of celebrating with greater pomp the solemnity of Easter, the latter being a generic name which included the memory of the Last Supper and the Passion, the death and resurrection of our Lord. In this way, as we have said above, the Mass is the germ of the christian week and the liturgical year.

We could wish for more details concerning the liturgical *synaxis* and the way in which the Eucharistic Sacrifice was celebrated in apostolic times. On this point we do not know as much as we could wish because the christians of those days were not very much given to record on paper or parchment their doings and experiences. There exist, however, a few important testimonies which may guide us in our research.

First of all we have the testimony of S. Paul. Unfortunately he gives us no description of the rite but merely alludes to certain abuses which he castigates. The christians of Corinth to whom Paul writes (1 Cor. xi) foregathered indeed, as the custom was, for the Lord's Supper—*dominica cœna.* But they had also turned it into a kind of banquet towards which everyone contributed his own share which he subsequently consumed. The breaking of bread, that is, the Eucharistic celebration, took place after the meal, and in consequence it happened that the rich ate and drank to satiety, whereas a poor man, having contributed but his small pittance, remained hungry. We need not wonder at S. Paul's severe strictures of such a fashion of celebrating a repast whose name—*agape*—signified a love-feast and which thus preceded or accompanied the Eucharistic feast. Here was a strange way of preparing for it! 'Have you forgotten what I have taught you?' Paul asks; namely, how 'the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said: "Take ye and eat, this is my body which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of me." In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: "This chalice is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me." For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come. Therefore whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgement to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord. Therefore are there many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep" (1 Cor. xi, 23 ff.).

Nothing could be plainer than this testimony, which is confirmed by the evangelists also. These relate how at the time of the Jewish pasch, as he saw the hour of his Passion and death approaching, Jesus wished to gather his disciples around him in order to celebrate with them for the last time, the paschal feast which was to be for him like the last meal of a condemned man. To this end he sent Peter and John to Jersualem to make all things ready for the repast which he wished to eat in the house of a friend who had a large room suitable to the purpose. 'And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer. For I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And having taken the chalice, he gave thanks, and said : Take, and divide it among you : for I say to you, that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, till the kingdom of God come. And taking the bread, he gave thanks, and brake ; and gave to them, saying : This is my body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of me. In like manner the chalice also, after he had supped, saying : This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you " (Luc. xxii, 14–20). S. Matthew and S. Mark, except for a few details, give us a similar account. As for S. John, he speaks of the Eucharist in connexion with the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves which was a preparation for, and a symbol of, the Eucharist (Jo. vi), but in his description of the Last Supper he records some of the circumstances that marked the occasion, such as the washing of the feet of the apostles previous to the sublime prayer that followed the institution of the divine mystery (Jo. xiii ff.).

These texts furnish us with the required data for establishing the origin and nature of the Eucharist, though they do not give us a detailed account of the ceremonies and prayers that marked its celebration in apostolic times.

A document dating from about the end of the first or the beginning of the second century gives us a very vivid description of a christian gathering of the period :

'Now as regards the Eucharist, give thanks after this manner :
First, for the cup : " We give thee thanks, our Father, for the holy vine of David, thy servant,
Which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant.
To thee be the glory for ever.
And for the broken bread :

We give thanks to thee, our Father,
For the life and knowledge which thou hast made known to us through Jesus, thy Servant :
To thee be the glory for ever.
As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, and having been gathered together, became one,
So let thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth, into thy kingdom ;
For thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ, for ever."
But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist, except those baptized into the name of the Lord, for as regards this also the Lord has said : "Give not that which is holy to the dogs."
Now after being filled, give thanks after this manner :
"We thank thee, holy Father, for thy holy name which thou hast caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which thou hast made known to us through Jesus, thy Servant.
To thee be the glory for ever.
Thou, O almighty Sovereign, didst make all things for thy sake,
Thou gavest food and drink to men, for enjoyment, that they might give thanks to thee.
But to us, thou didst freely give spiritual food and drink and eternal life, through thy Servant.
Before all things we give thanks to thee that thou art mighty,
To thee be the glory for ever.
Remember, O Lord, thy Church ; to deliver her from all evil and to perfect her in thy love. And gather her together from the four winds, sanctified for thy kingdom which thou didst prepare for her ;
For thine is the power and glory for ever.
Let grace come and let this world pass away !
Hosanna to the God of David !
If any one is holy let him come,

If any one is not holy, let him repent.
Maran Atha (the Lord cometh). Amen."
But permit thy prophets to give thanks as much as they wish.'

(Διδαχή, 9 Edit. & transl. of Phil. Schaff, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1885.)

This document is one of the oldest and most precious that we have in support of the Mass. It does not attempt to give a full description of the rite; its aim is merely to supply a pattern of prayers to be recited then, and even the text of these is by no means unvarying, for the author adds: 'As for the prophets, suffer them to give thanks as much as they are able,' that is, with fullest liberty.

This testimony must be supplemented by another of a not much later date. Justin is one of the most interesting personages of that period (the middle of the second century). As a philosopher in quest of wisdom, he travelled extensively in the pursuit of so precious a treasure. In the course of his journeys, he found and embraced what he had had no thought of seeking, namely, christianity, the only true wisdom. At that time the christians were being persecuted on the plea of their being bad citizens and dangerous and evil men. Justin undertook to defend them in an *apologia* addressed to the emperor Antoninus Pius, to Marcus Aurelius, his son, and Lucius Verus, his adopted son. In his Apologia Justin, who died in 163 or 167, gives a fairly complete description of the christian assemblies concerning which so many calumnies circulated among the pagans: 'After washing him who has professed and given his assent (Justin has just described the rite of Baptism) we bring him to those who are called brethren, where they are assembled together, to offer prayers in common both for ourselves and for the person who has received illumination (viz. Baptism), and all others everywhere, with all our hearts;

that we might be vouchsafed, now we have learned the truth, by our works also to be found good citizens, and keepers of the commandments, that we may obtain everlasting salvation.

‘We salute one another with a kiss when we have concluded the prayers: then, to the president of the brethren is brought bread and a cup of water and wine which he receives, and he offers up praise and glory to the Father of all things, through the name of his Son and of the Holy Ghost; and he returns thanks at length for our being vouchsafed these things by him. When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgiving, all the people who are present express their assent by saying *Amen*. This word, *Amen*, means in the Greek language: So be it! And when the president has celebrated the Eucharist, and all the people have assented, they whom we call deacons give to each of those who are present a portion of the Eucharistic bread and wine and water, and carry them to those who are absent. And this food is called by us the *Eucharist*, of which no one is allowed to partake but he who believes the truth of our doctrines and who has been washed in the laver for the forgiveness of sins and to regeneration and who so lives as Christ has directed. For we do not receive them as ordinary food, or ordinary drink, but as by the word of God Jesus Christ our Saviour was made flesh, and had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so also the food which was blessed by the prayer of the word which proceeded from him and from which our flesh and blood, by assimilation, receive nourishment, is, we are taught, both the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the Apostles, in their records which they made and which are called gospels, have declared that Jesus commanded them to do as follows: “He took bread and gave thanks and said: This do in remembrance of me, this is my body. And in like manner he took the cup, and blessed it and said: This is my blood: and gave it to them alone.” The same thing in the mysteries of Mithra the evil demons imitated and commanded to be done, for bread and a cup of water are placed in the mystic rites for one who is to be initiated, with the addition of certain words, as you know or may learn.' (*Apologia*, LXV, LXVI; The Library of the Fathers, p. 50.)

Another precious landmark in this survey is a Eucharistic prayer, or *anaphora*, the authorship of which a recent discovery ascribes to S. Hippolytus, a bishop resident at Rome during the first quarter of the third century. It must be quoted here were it only for its dogmatic significance and because it is the oldest text of the canon of the Mass known to us: 'We give thee thanks, O God, through thy beloved Son Jesus Christ whom in these latter times thou didst send to us as a Saviour and Redeemer and the angel (messenger) of thy will, who is the Word inseparable from thee, by whom thou didst create all things and in whom thou art well pleased. From heaven thou sentest him into the Virgin's womb where he was made flesh and manifested himself as thy Son, born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin. Afterwards, in order that he might carry out thy will and win for thee a holy people, he extended his hands, at the time of his passion, in order to free from suffering those who believe in thee. And at the time when, of his own will, he offered himself for his passion that so he might destroy death, break the bands of the devil, crush hell underfoot, enlighten the just, fix a limit and manifest the resurrection: taking bread and giving thanks to thee, he said: "Take, eat, this is my body which shall be broken for you." In like manner the chalice, saying: "This is my blood, which is shed for you, when you do this you make a memory of me." Wherefore, mindful of his death and his resurrection, we offer thee the bread and the cup, with thanksgiving, because thou didst permit us to stand in thy presence and to serve thee. And we pray thee that thou wouldst send thy Holy Spirit upon the offering of thy holy Church and that, gathering them into one, thou wouldst grant to all the saints who partake (of the sacrifice) to be filled with the Holy Ghost and strengthened in the true faith, to the end that we may praise and glorify thee through thy Son Jesus Christ, through whom honour and glory is given to thee, to the Father, and the Son, with the Holy Ghost, in thy holy Church both now and for ever, world without end. Amen.' (Transl. from the Latin of Dom Connolly, O.S.B., in his 'The so-called Egyptian Church Orders,' Cambridge 1916, Appendix B.)

Both from the historical and dogmatic point of view, this prayer is of the greatest importance. It is so also by reason of its contents, the date of its composition and the position of its author, one of the chief personages of the Roman Church in the first quarter of the third century. Its value is yet further enhanced by the fact that it constitutes the basis of the prayer of the *anaphora* in the oldest liturgies, including that of Rome, all of which do no more than expand and develop a formula that some people thought too concise.

It should also be noted that this *anaphora* is not only the prayer of consecration of the bread and wine, it is also a summary of the christian faith, stating the chief articles of the creed, such as that Jesus Christ, the Word that is inseparable from God, by whom the Father created all things, came from heaven and was made flesh in the Virgin's womb by the operation of the Holy Ghost; that he overcame death and hell by his death and resurrection. The work of the Holy Ghost in the sacraments and in the soul (communion of Saints), and in the Church, is also clearly outlined. In fact we may note already now the keenness so often met with in the liturgy, to make of an act of worship also a profession of faith in the dogmas of religion.

In the fourth century we shall meet with even fuller descriptions, but already at this point, by adding to the foregoing texts information supplied by other writers of the period and by the application of the comparative method to the various liturgies which appeared shortly after the fourth century, we are in a position to form a fairly clear idea of the ante-Nicene Mass.

The first part, called Mass of the catechumens, because these were allowed to be present at it, consisted of the recitation or singing of psalms, reading, and a homily. We ge[illegible] idea of it by looking at the section of our R[illegible]s which comes before the offertory and which [illegible] the name of *Mass of the catechumens*, or *ante-*[illegible] in this way our Mass is brought in line with [illegible] liturgies, notwithstanding certain accretions which occurred in the course of the centuries—a prayer said by the pontiff (collect), a reading from the Old Testament, the epistles, or the Acts (epistle), the gradual psalm, the tract, a reading from the gospel and lastly a homily on the gospel text—such are its main elements. The liturgy of Good Friday, ending as it does with the reading of the Passion according to S. John and the prayers in the form of a litany; or the twelve lessons of the morning office of Holy Saturday with their prayers and tracts and the litany that follows, retain even more faithfully the features of the ante-Nicene Mass of the catechumens. The first part of the Mass, the main features of which point to their having been borrowed from the liturgy of the Synagogue, is first of all a prayer of praise in the psalms, a prayer of supplication in the collects, a prayer of intercession in the litany, whilst the readings from the Old and the New Testament and the sermon prove that the Church was always mindful of her mission to teach her people. Up to this point there is no allusion, at least not a direct one, to the Mass properly so called, viz. to the sacrifice and to Communion, hence the catechumens, the penitents and even the pagans were permitted to be present.

But at the end of the homily these various classes were dismissed and none but the baptized and those who were to communicate remained. The elements of this second part have been pretty faithfully preserved in the Roman Mass and in that of other liturgies. The faithful now offer the bread and the wine, which are to be used in the sacrifice, as well as other eatables, which are to be blessed at the end of Mass, such as oil, milk, fruits, and vegetables. When the quantity of bread and wine required for Mass and Communion had been set on one side, there remained at times a fairly large amount of provisions, and even gifts of money, which were set aside for the maintenance of the clergy, the widows, the virgins, the orphans, and the poor. In the fourth century, when this ceremony took a considerable time, especially in large churches, the people were made to sing a psalm. This is the *Offertory* of to-day. The censing of the altar to-day recalls the censing of the gifts of the faithful. Then the priest washed his hands, as he does to-day, by way of preparation for the sacrifice. The blessed bread (*pain bénit*) which is distributed to the faithful in some churches[1] is also a reminder of old-time customs. Over these offerings the pontiff pronounced a prayer now called *Secret*.

At this moment came *the prayer of the faithful*, that is, a prayer for all the needs of the Church, for the catechumens, the penitents, for travellers, prisoners, those in affliction, for the emperor and the magistrates, even for the Jews, for heretics and pagans, as is done to this day in the solemn prayers of Good Friday. It was probably then also that commemoration was made of the dead and that the diptychs were read. The latter were a kind of catalogue or book in which were set down the names of the bishops with whom the Church was in communion, and even the names of some of the faithful. In the fourth and fifth century the faithful took enormous interest in these lists and to have one's name registered in the diptychs was deemed an honour and a privilege.

[1] In France.

The diptychs were the *Book of Life :* the names of the living who had rendered themselves unworthy of the honour, were struck off, in fact this even happened at times to the names of the dead. At the time of the Arian controversies, and even at a later date, the registering of a name in the diptychs, or its erasure, often led to fierce contests, for it was a sign of communion or of excommunication. If, as appears probable, the diptychs were already in use in the ante-Nicene era, the custom evidently led to no disturbances. In any case, the idea of a *Book of Life* containing the names of the elect, which in all probability is the origin of the diptychs, was familiar to the apostolic era. It it spoken of in the Apocalypse and in other documents of the period.

A study of the *anaphora* of Hippolytus shows that our *preface* with its *Dominus vobiscum*, *Sursum corda*, etc., the canon with the narrative of the Last Supper, the consecration and the prayers that follow, as far as the final doxology : *per ipsum*, *et cum ipso*, *et in ipso*, proceed on similar lines, except for the addition of the *Sanctus*, which, at least as regards its place here, seems to belong to a later age, together with the *Memento* of the living and the dead. It is easy to see why antiquity came to call this prayer the Eucharistic prayer *par excellence.* Before all else it is a prayer of thanksgiving, *εὐχαριστία* ; in it we give thanks to God for all his benefits, particularly for the benefit of the incarnation and redemption and for the institution of this sacrament of bread and wine of which Communion makes us partakers.

The *anaphora* of Hippolytus also shows that at that time the rite ended with a short prayer of thanksgiving and the blessing of the pontiff. It is this section which has received most accretions since the fourth century, such as the *Agnus Dei* and the prayers that follow, the prayer to the Trinity (*Placeat tibi*, *sancta Trinitas . . .*) and the last gospel.

The Mass which, as we remarked at the beginning, retains even to-day the place of honour in christian worship was, during the first three centuries, more than it is to-day, the centre of the liturgy and its most important expression. It was this that constituted the real bond of union between the members of every christian community. Not alone were pagans and heretics excluded from it, but even the catechumens and those of the faithful who, by reason of some sin, had been placed in the ranks of the penitents. The part taken in it by the faithful was more immediate than it is to-day. The Mass was an established thing—and with an identical ritual. We find it at Rome, at Alexandria, at Antioch, in Africa and in Syria, and its ritual is everywhere the same. As a bishop of the third century puts it, after a journey round the little world of those days, he found everywhere brethren who receive from the Church the divine *ichthus*, that is, Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER III

BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

IF we have treated of the Eucharist in the first place it is because it comes first in the scale of values. Chronologically and according to the order followed in the administration of the sacraments, Baptism takes precedence over the other sacraments. It marks the first step in christian life ; it is the sacrament of initiation ; it makes the believer a member of the Church, washes away his sins and transforms his soul. According to S. Paul, Baptism is both a dying and a coming to life, a dying, that is, to sin, and a being born to a new life. In this sacrament the old man—that is, sinful man—dies and is buried and rises with Christ, a new man ; the whole process is a new birth, a regeneration. S. Paul studies this truth in all its aspects—there is hardly another on which he dwells with so much insistence. S. John also, on almost every page of his gospel, speaks of a new life, an eternal and divine life in Christ, which he brought into the world and which he bestows upon his followers. Baptism makes us sharers of this blessed and everlasting life. Only a deep meditation on the teaching of the apostle of the nations and the beloved disciple will bring home to us the full meaning of this new rite.

The various names given to the sacrament single out its chief effects. *To baptize*, from the Greek *βαπτιζεῖν*, *βαπτεῖν*, means : to wash, to cleanse, to immerse. But this interpretation by no means exhausts the meaning of the word. Baptism is also an *illumination*, revealing, as it does, to us supernatural truths ; it is a *seal*, and as it were, a branding of the forehead of the christian ; it is the *σφραγίς*, *signaculum*, the seal of Christ, the seal of the Lord, the seal of faith, the *sacrament of water*, a *laver*. These titles are all found in S. Justin, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and other writers of the period.

Baptism is essentially a christian rite. The Jews had certain lustrations with water, but they are only remotely connected with Baptism—John the Baptist baptized in the Jordan, but his was not the christian Baptism. At Ephesus S. Paul fell in with some disciples who claimed to be christians : 'Have you received the Holy Ghost ?' he asks. They are taken aback and reply : 'We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost.' It is now Paul's turn to be surprised : 'In what then were you baptized ?' They answer : 'In John's baptism.' Then Paul said : 'John baptized the people with the baptism of penance, saying : That they should believe in him who was to come after him, that is to say, in Jesus. Having heard these things, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them' (Acts xix, 1 ff.).

The context shows that this Baptism *in nomine Domini Jesu* is the christian Baptism, in which the Holy Ghost is received, in a word, Baptism in the name of the three divine Persons, instituted by our Lord when he said to his apostles : "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations : baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost' (Matth. xxviii, 18 ff.). In the Acts and in the writings of S. Paul Baptism is frequently mentioned. We see S. Peter baptizing the Jews converted by his preaching ; he even baptizes a pagan in the person of Cornelius, the centurion, thus beating down the barrier which the Jews had put up between themselves and the other nations, and Philip baptizes the enunch of Candace, the queen of Ethiopia.

In every instance Baptism is with water and in the name of Christ. We have here what theologians call the matter and form of the sacrament. The matter is water. Wherever possible, the catechumen is bodily plunged into the water, and then we have Baptism by *immersion.* In this case the symbolism is perfect, for the whole man is washed and cleansed. Hence, in primitive times, the baptistry was a building apart from the church and containing a basin or font, called the baptismal font. However, immersion is not essential and the pouring of a small quantity of water over the head suffices. We read in the *Didache:* 'If you have not at hand running water (a stream or brook), baptize in another water; if you cannot baptize in cold water, baptize in warm water; if you have neither the one nor the other, pour out water over the head, three times, *in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*'

The form of Baptism—*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,* is that which Christ gave to the apostles, as is shown by the above-quoted text of S. Matthew and even by the words of S. Paul. On this point all liturgies are at one. It is the form required by the apostolic documents and is attested by S. Irenæus, S. Justin, Tertullian, and ever so many writers of the period. As a matter of fact, the formula: '*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*' is not exclusively found in Baptism; on the contrary, it is a current formula and occurs in nearly all prayers. In the opinion of some historians, it is to the words spoken in Baptism that we owe the doxology, viz. the *Gloria Patri,* etc., which is such a striking feature of Catholic prayer.

The Baptism described in the Acts perhaps surprises us by reason of its simplicity, the absence of all ceremonial and all preparation on the part of the recipient. Maybe the reason is to be looked for in the fact that these early disciples were Jews or proselytes, men, therefore, who shared with the christians a number of beliefs, such as faith in God almighty, eternal, creator of the universe, the law of the decalogue given by him, belief in a future existence, the same holy books, without speaking of the many customs they likewise had in common.

Soon, however, Baptism was to be enriched, or the synthesis it constitutes was about to be broken up into its component parts. Little by little the sacrament is made the occasion of a gradual initiation into the various mysteries of christianity ; it is a slowly ascending process, by graduated stages, to a climax which is the full illumination of the soul and its birth to a new life.

This prudent conduct of the Church is owing, I think, to contact with the pagans, a clearer grasp of their needs, their aspirations and also their vices. Here there was no common ground, as with the converts from Judaism. Only yesterday the pagan still believed in his idols and paid them divine worship, and his life has often been licentious. He has strayed far and has sunk very low ; hence the Church treats him somehow as the sinner of the gospel, who was possessed of seven devils. Minucius Felix, who belongs to this period, has a curious passage in which he sums up current opinion : 'These unclean spirits (the devils),' he says, 'hide themselves behind the statues and images of the gods . . . they dwell in the temples (of the pagans), they quicken the entrails (of the victims), they direct the flight of birds, they are the masters of chance, in their oracles they mingle a few truths with many falsehoods.'[1]

This gave rise to rites, most of which are still found in our present-day baptismal rite and which, at first, take the outsider so much by surprise (especially the Baptism of adults) : such as the threefold renunciation of Satan, exorcism by repeated breathings, numerous signs of the cross on the forehead, the ears, the eyes, the nostrils, the lips, the breast, the shoulders, the imposition of hands, the exorcism of the salt which is to be placed on the tongue of the catechumens, the *ephpheta* (be thou opened !) which the priest utters as he repeats the gesture of Christ when he touched the ears and the tongue of the man who was deaf and dumb, the unctions with the oil of the catechumens and with the sacred chrism.

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[1] Ph. 27. Cf. Tertull., Apol. XXII, which is, perhaps, inspired by the passage from M. Felix.

Most of these rites, which to some appear out-of-date survivals because they do not understand their meaning and are ignorant of their origin, date back to an epoch when it was necessary to impress upon the convert from paganism certain capital truths, on which the writers of the first centuries lay great stress. The first of these facts is that the worship of idols is the worship of devils, hence it is necessary to cleanse the soul of a pagan from all its stains and to initiate him by degrees to a new life before he can be washed in the waters of Baptism. This initiation was carried out by means of the exercises of the catechumenate. These were spread over periods the length of which varied according to different countries, as did also the trials to which the candidate was subjected.

These trials, for the most part, took place during Lent, because at that time Baptism was administered by preference during the night from Holy Saturday to Easter Sunday. Apart from the exorcisms, the unctions and the blessings, one day was set apart on which the Lord's prayer was taught to the candidate and its meaning explained, stress being laid on the fact that the *Pater* is the true christian prayer ; on another day he was taught the Apostles' Creed—*traditio symboli*. He was expected to know it by heart and to be able to explain each of its articles. Later on we shall examine the origin and meaning of the formula. It was understood that by this act the candidate accepted the teaching of the Church and undertook to defend her dogmas. He was likewise given a copy of the four gospels which embody the teaching of our Lord and which, as a matter of fact, have the appearance of having been composed in the form of a catechetical instruction. Then there was a day for the ceremony of the *ephpheta*, *aperitio aurium*, the opening of the ears. I am well aware that some of these rites belong to a somewhat later period than the one under examination ; at any rate their existence is proved only by post-Nicene documents, but the bulk of them belong to an earlier date and contemporary writers allude to them. We might say that the nature of the sacrament is best brought home to us by a study of the ritual used to-day at the Baptism of an adult.

Another means by which we may assimilate these lessons is the study of the Lenten liturgy, which still retains a vast number of epistles, gospels, collects, antiphons, and responsories that are genuine relics of the past of long ago and which the Roman Church has preserved for our edification and instruction.

Nor was it without premeditation that Baptism was administered to adults during the night of Easter Sunday. They must die with Christ, that they may rise with him to a new life. The ceremonies of Holy Saturday preserve the customs of antiquity. In the blessing of the new fire, the *Exultet*, the twelve lessons with their prayers and tracts, the blessing of the font and the litany there are countless allusions to the catechumens who are about to be baptized.

In the text of the Acts already quoted we see S. Paul laying his hands on the newly-baptized who thereupon receive the Holy Ghost. Elsewhere, in the same book, we read that the apostles having heard that the deacon Philip had baptized several men of Samaria in the name of Jesus Christ, Peter and John were commissioned by those in Jerusalem to bestow upon them the Holy Ghost, for ‘ they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost ’ (Acts viii, 14 ff.).

Here we have an imposition of hands distinct from that of Baptism, which confers the Holy Ghost—it is the sacrament of Confirmation. At that period Confirmation was usually administered at once after Baptism. The three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist were all received during the function of the night of Easter, the rites of which are all most closely linked together.

To-day Confirmation has been separated from Baptism, and like the latter it has undergone certain developments. To the imposition of hands, which, originally, seems to have been considered the essence of the sacrament, there has been added an unction upon the forehead. In the first period, at least in some places, the whole body was anointed with oil. The symbolism was then far more realistic and expressive; it reminded the christian that, like a gladiator on another field, he too must be prepared at all times to wrestle with his unseen foes. Chrism, that is oil mixed with balsam, is the matter of Confirmation, as water is that of Baptism; not that the oil of Confirmation produces the same effects or that it is essential for the validity of the sacrament, as water is for Baptism, but it is an eminently appropriate symbol of the outpouring of the grace of the Holy Ghost who is spread in our soul as the oil is poured over our body. Small wonder then that the Church should have found room, among the ceremonies of Maundy Thursday, for one of her most solemn functions, namely the blessing of the holy oils. The stateliness, not to say the exuberance that characterizes the function as we see it in the Pontifical of to-day shows at once that it does not belong to the earliest liturgical period; however, its main elements are very ancient, for we find them in the '*Traditio apostolica*' of Hippolytus and in some ecclesiastical documents of the third and fourth century.

The names given to Confirmation in primitive times, like those of Baptism, help us to a better understanding of its nature and significance. *Confirmation*, which has won the day with us, is not the oldest name of the sacrament, though it is much in use in the West, particularly in Gaul, in the fifth century. It is already in S. Ambrose, in the fourth century, and even in some of the Greek Fathers, such as Didymus of Alexandria and Cyril of Jerusalem. S. Paul, in fact, uses an equivalent term (2 Cor. i, 21). *To confirm* means to strengthen, to affirm a thing with fresh force or emphasis, and such is precisely the conception entertained from the first of the grace of the Holy Ghost by which the christian becomes a soldier, a warrior equipped with the weapons with which he can fight the devil and his own evil inclinations.

But the more common name for *Confirmation* among the early christians is that of *Imposition of hands*, or *of the hand*, which is the essential rite of the sacrament. However, ' imposition of hands ' seems too vague, for the rite is observed in the administration of other sacraments, especially that of Baptism. The *Gift* of the Holy Ghost seemed more distinctive and has been preserved in various Greek liturgies. But the most expressive and most frequently used word in christian antiquity is that of *σφραγίς*, in Latin *signaculum* or *consignatio*, that is, *sign* or *seal*, *sealing*, a word which, as a matter of fact, was at that period also used to designate Baptism, though already at an early date it was exclusively applied to the sacrament of Confirmation. The christian receives the imprint of a seal, his forehead is marked with a sign, hence the bishop traces the sign of the cross upon the forehead of the candidate.

The question is, however, whether at that time this sign was simply the sign of the cross, or whether it was already then, as it was a little later and as it is to-day, an unction with the sacred chrism in the form of a cross.[1]

At the close of the ceremony the bishop, who is the ordinary minister of the sacrament, used to give the kiss of peace to the candidate, as was done at Baptism and other functions. The rite still subsists in our Ritual. The bishop says: *Pax tecum*, but instead of embracing the candidate he strikes him gently on the cheek. Some liturgists maintain that this symbolism is of later date and that it is really a light touch of the cheek which takes the place of a kiss which might have given rise to comment when women were confirmed; others see in it a relic of the juridical institutions of the Middle Ages in which a stroke on the cheek played a certain rôle.

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[1] Cf. the article " Confirmation " in the *Dict. d'arch. et de lit.*, col. 2532.

CHAPTER IV

PENANCE

BAPTISM wipes out sin. This is very far from being its only effect on the soul, for we have seen that it is a whole storehouse of spiritual wealth. It is none the less true that most of its figures or types, as well as the etymology of the word, recall the idea of a bath that washes and cleanses from all stains.

It would seem that a man to whom this sacrament has restored his innocence and the righteousness in which the first man was created, a man reconciled to God and sharing in his divine life, could not fall back into sin. At that period of first fervour such was the thought of many. Yet it was easy to foresee that, through human frailty, the rule would suffer many exceptions, even at a time when the Church was very discriminating in the admission of fresh recruits. What was then the condition of a christian who fell into sin, more especially into grave sin? The question was bound to arise; as a matter of fact, it arose in the very first years. The discussions that ensued were not so much concerned with the existence and reality of the power of forgiving sins, as with the manner in which it should be exercised and with the crimes that led to the definitive exclusion of the guilty person from communion with the Church, such as apostasy, adultery, homicide, and fornication.

However, already then the question is mooted of a second Baptism, a saving plank to which those may cling who suffer shipwreck after baptism. The analogy between the two sacraments leads to a general discussion in which the shrewdness of Hermas, Tertullian, the author or authors of the *Didascalia* and other ancient writers finds full scope. The first-named, the author of a curious book entitled *Pastor*, the Shepherd, the theology of which is that of a tyro, discusses in his *visions*, his *precepts*, and his *similitudes* the question of Penance. The most striking thing about his book is his picture of the mental anguish of a christian who has sinned after Baptism and who longs to become reconciled to the Church. The original meaning of μετάνοια, μετανοεῖν, a specifically christian word, frequently used in the New Testament and by the writers of that first period, is ‘ to retract,’ ‘ to be converted,’ ‘ to repent ’—that is—to do penance. It implies contrition, the avowal of faults, satisfaction, a firm purpose not to sin again, that is, all those acts which the Church requires to-day as the tokens of a real conversion. Mural paintings in the Catacombs depicting the healing of the man sick of the palsy, the raising of Lazarus, and the strayed sheep rescued by the Good Shepherd, refer to Penance, as well as to Baptism. In the second century the sect of Montanus claimed that the Church, which, according to them, consisted of the pure and the elect only, must not and cannot forgive certain sins. A similar dispute, carried on with even greater violence, arose in the third century, when some affected to be shocked by the edict of a Pope admitting to Penance those guilty of adultery and apostasy.

A little later, in the same century, the Roman priest Novatus, remarkable both for his great gifts and his ambition, separated himself from the Roman Church, together with a large following, on the plea that she was too lax and over-indulgent in her dealings with those guilty of grave sins. There are other facts and texts to show that in every century, up to the time of the Jansenists, there were rigorists of every description who taught that certain crimes were unforgivable, or at least that the Church dealt too leniently with those who commit them. Undismayed by these Pharisaical objections the Church never hesitated to claim the power of forgiving every kind of sin committed after Baptism, and she laid down rules for its exercise. This power she professes to hold from Christ who, during his mortal life, himself pardoned sinners. Thus he said to the man sick of the palsy: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee';[1] he pardons the woman taken in adultery and her who was a sinner in the city. When the Jews express their surprise, and even murmur, he declares emphatically that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins. By S. John Christ is called the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. This power he communicated to his Church, for he said to Peter: 'And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.'[2] Similar words are spoken to the whole apostolic college: 'Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven.'[3] And after his resurrection he adds: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.'[4] These texts, as regards their authenticity, their exact meaning, their import, and controversies relating to the *power of the keys* to which we have alluded, have been carefully examined in works some of which leave nothing to be desired in respect to the knowledge and critical acumen of their authors. We must be content with referring the reader to them, for in these pages we are only concerned with the liturgical side of the matter.

Liturgically the position of the sacrament of Penance differs from that of Baptism. If it is permissible to put it thus, Penance is, as it were, a private sacrament. To-day the whole drama of the avowal of sins and their forgiveness is a secret transaction between priest and penitent and its ritual is of the simplest kind. It was not otherwise in the first centuries. That is why we know so little about private Penance whereas we are able to draw a detailed picture of Baptism and Ordination.[1] Another reason hinted at a moment ago, and which must be admitted, however much we may wonder at it, is that in those days many christians preserved their baptismal innocence, so that Penance held a less prominent place in christian life than it does to-day.

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[1] Matt. ix, 2.

[2] *Ibid.*, xvi, 19.

[3] *Ibid.*, xviii, 18.

[4] Jo. xx, 22, 23.

But there was one exception. If the scandal was a public one—which was easily the case by reason of the intimacy between the members of the first christian communities—the reparation had also to be a public one. In those days it was scarcely possible for a christian to fall into a somewhat grave sin without the whole community becoming aware of the fact. This is particularly true in cases of adultery, homicide, apostasy, or heresy, of which we have already spoken. Such sins entailed both public chastisement and public penance. For a more or less prolonged period the culprit saw himself cut off from communion with the Church; he was put in a category apart and was subjected to penances which were at times humiliating. Only after an expiation proportioned to his sin would he be reconciled to the Church. These exercises entailed—even as private Penance does to-day—the confession—*exomologesis*—of sin, satisfaction, or penance, contrition—of which outward proofs were required—and lastly absolution. Tertullian gives us a vivid description of all these acts. It has been frequently quoted, but we must give it here, it is so characteristic of the man ! In a vehement apostrophe to Pope Callistus, he says : ‘ Thou admittest into the Church the repentant adulterer who pleads with the assembled people ; clothed in a hair-shirt, covered with ashes, with a sad and even terrifying mien, he appears before them. He prostrates in the midst of the assembly, before the widows, before the priests ; he seizes the fringe of their garments ; he kisses the ground whereon they have stood ; he embraces their knees. All this time thou exhortest the people, rousing their pity towards the miserable suppliant. Good Shepherd, kindly father, thou tellest the parable of the lost sheep in order that thy straying one may be restored to thee ; thou assurest thy hearers that it will not in future escape from the fold . . .’[1] In chapter xii we shall see that not long after this period, the *lapsi*, that is, christians who had fallen during the persecution, were wont to ask the confessors of the faith to plead on their behalf and to obtain their pardon and their readmission into the christian community.

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[1] Warren, who denies the existence of any proofs of private confession previous to Nicæa, nevertheless quotes the following text in which Origen, among other means of freeing oneself from sin, indicates this one: 'There exists also another means for the remission of sin, though a hard and difficult one, namely penance, when the sinner washes his bed with his tears, which are his food by day and by night; when he subjects himself to the humiliation of confessing his sin to the priest of the Lord and seeks a remedy at his hands, according to the words of the psalmist: "I will confess my sins to the Lord and he will forgive me," etc.' *The Liturgy and Ritual of the ante-Nicene Church*, 2nd edit., p. 76.

In some ways the condition of the penitents was not unlike that of the catechumens. The latter aspired after Baptism, the former after reconciliation to the Church ; neither class was allowed to be present at the sacrifice. It was decided already at an early date that a certain period of the year should be set apart during which the catechumens were to prepare for Baptism and the others were to take up the works of penance. Lent, in its present form, does not go back beyond a point between the fourth and the fifth century, but we see it already outlined in the preceding epoch. The imposition of ashes at the beginning of Lent and the reconciliation of penitents on Maundy Thursday, which we find in the Pontifical, are reminiscences of the public penance. The very phraseology of some of these rites sufficiently shows their antiquity; in fact, they quite often take us back to the fourth century. But if these instances of public penance are concerned with specific cases, that is, with faults generally held to be most grievous, it must be borne in mind that a christian, even if he has not sunk to such depths, nevertheless looks upon himself as a sinner in God's sight and as one bound by the law of penance. At that period asceticism was more rigorous than it is to-day; the whole ecclesiastical discipline bears witness to the fact, and if there were need of proofs, the book of Hermas already quoted would supply them. However, these considerations would be quite foreign to our subject if penance had not frequently taken a liturgical form, a fact which must be stressed here. Thus fasting is almost invariably joined to prayer and to other liturgical functions. The *Stations* of Wednesdays and Fridays are days of fast, as are all vigils. Lent owes its institution to Easter. At the period of which we are treating its observance varied greatly in different churches, but the purpose is the same everywhere, that is, it is essentially a preparation for the festival, and this preparation is always penitential. Contrariwise during the fifty days between Easter and Pentecost, fasting and all other signs of penance are in abeyance. A similar privilege distinguishes the Sunday, and even Saturday, at least in certain provinces removed from Rome's influence where people seemed unable to forget that the day was once the Jewish sabbath.

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[1] *De Pudicitia*, 13. Duchesne remarks on this passage that when Tertullian penned these words, he was a Montanist and a bitter opponent of Pope Callistus, on whom he endeavours to heap ridicule. The passage might be set beside a text in the *De Pœnitentia*, 11, in which Tertullian, more humane and still orthodox, prescribes the line of conduct to be taken by the penitent.

The *exomolegesis*, or confession of sins, now represented by the *Confiteor* said by the priest at the foot of the altar at the beginning of Mass and repeated before the Communion, is a custom of hoary antiquity, traces of which can be found in Clement of Rome, in the Διδαχή and other documents of that period. It was also practised apart from Mass. The petition of the Lord's prayer, *dimitte nobis debita nostra*, is often singled out from others both in the liturgy and in the writings of the Fathers. The custom of washing the hands before entering the church is to the same effect. Countless ceremonies of the primitive liturgy, and of the liturgy of to-day, express the need felt by the christian to humble himself before God, to strike his breast and fall upon his knees, as did the publican, in acknowledgement of his unworthiness and in order to plead for pardon of his sins. Surely it was this feeling which inspired, at an early date, the bringing together in a small volume of those seven psalms which express more eloquently than the rest, the sentiments of sorrow and repentance. The same may be said of the *Prayer of Manasses* and of that of the Good Thief: '*Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom!*' of which we find traces in the primitive liturgy.[1]

Yet another penitential exercise should be mentioned here. The case of heretics wishing to return to the Church was of frequent occurrence. It gave rise to much discussion and the Church was compelled to legislate in the matter. Like the rest of the penitents, they were reconciled by the laying-on of hands. Not a few bishops, among them S. Cyprian, thought the Baptism of heretics was null and that it had to be given again to those who had received it at their hands. This was an exaggeration and an error, for Baptism administered according to the usual ritual, by a heretic, by a pagan even, must be deemed valid. Pope Stephen settled the controversy by decreeing that tradition should be followed and that it was enough, as a token of penance, to lay hands upon heretics, whoever they might be.

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[1] Luke xxiii, 42.

Cf. our *Liturgical Prayer*, ch. xxviii. Burns Oates and Washbourne, London.

The question has been asked whether this laying-on of hands was the sacrament of Confirmation which can only be validly administered in the Church. The controversy does not belong to our subject. What is certain is that absolution was given by the imposition of hands to all sinners, whether heretics or not. S. Cyprian and other writers of the period bear witness to this practice.[1]

[1] Cf. Warren, *loc. cit.*, pp. 49 and 73.

CHAPTER V

HOLY ORDER

WE see then the followers of Christ constituting a separate society: so much so, in fact, that there were not wanting those—maybe friends, maybe enemies—who asserted that they were a *third race*, *tertium genus*, the first being the pagans and the second the Jews. The new society bears a distinctive title, Church, *Ecclesia*, from the Greek Εκκλησία, that is, a gathering, a meeting, more particularly an official gathering of the citizens of a town. Christ himself bestowed this name on the society founded by him. Thus the new title, so rich in significance, is the antithesis of the word *synagogue*, though the latter is likewise of Greek origin and has practically the same meaning.

A Church, *ecclesia*, is necessarily a society, and a society implies a hierarchy, discipline, leaders, and superiors. Jesus Christ himself established a hierarchy when he chose the seventy-two disciples and the twelve Apostles of whom Peter was constituted the chief. He communicated to them something of his own powers; he commissioned them to preach to Jews and Gentiles; he gave them power to heal the sick, to cast out devils, to perform the Eucharistic rite: 'Going, teach ye all nations . . . and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world' (Matt. xxviii, 19, 20), and he commanded them to baptize and to forgive sins.

As for S. Paul, we see him keeping under his personal jurisdiction or that of his lieutenants the churches founded by him. In his writings, as in the Acts, we already meet with the titles that were to become so important: *priests* (πρεσβύτεροι, elders), *bishops* (ἐπίσκοποι, superiors), *deacons* and *deaconesses* (διάκονοι, =ministers, servants). The Apostles preach, baptize, preside at the Eucharistic celebrations, lay on hands in Confirmation, penance, or ordination, choose a successor to Judas, send off missionaries, organize, and administer; when difficulties arise in the church of Jerusalem they select seven men of good repute and ordain them the first deacons. Later on the church of Jerusalem is governed by S. James, one of the twelve; however, Peter remains the head, occupies the first place, intervenes everywhere, and really plays the chief rôle in the church of the holy City. If the gospels were silent—and they are not—(cf. in particular Matt. xvi, 17–19) the Acts of the Apostles would sufficiently show the rank and position he held.

We need not now prove the existence, or recount the origin, of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. If there were no texts to demonstrate it, the harmonious organization of the Church in the first centuries would be enough to prove it. Considering the ferment in which all things were at the beginning and to which S. Paul and the Acts testify, if there had been no firmly established authority, the most hopeless anarchy would have ensued and we should then have witnessed a situation akin to that in which we find the gnostics of the second century who are then little more than a conglomeration of sects which are constantly being split into yet smaller fragments, according to the whims of the leaders, who pull them now this way, now that, and whose teaching is as diverse as their ritual.

This last point is of interest to us, and we have to find out how far it affects worship. The ministers we have enumerated are not merely appointed by the choice or vote of the community or its leaders, after the fashion in which public officials are appointed ; they are invested with a religious or spiritual character. Thus we see Matthias raised to the apostolic college in place of Judas, but only after prayer. The seven men chosen to act as deacons are consecrated by the prayer of the Apostles and the laying-on of hands ; Paul and Barnabas are selected after fasting and prayer (Acts i, 24 ; vi, 6 ; xiii, 3).

The Apostles look upon themselves as the ministers of Christ and the *dispensers of the mysteries of God* (1 Cor. iv, 1), and Paul exhorts Timothy to be mindful of the grace he received through the imposition of his hands (1 Tim. iv, 14).

The only rite mentioned in these and other texts is prayer, and the imposition of hands—*χειροτονία*—upon the elect, of the deep significance of which we shall speak presently. Other rites, particularly an unction, were added at an early period.

We see here a repetition of the phenomenon we noticed already when studying Baptism and other sacraments. The rite has a tendency to grow, to unfold, to emphasize certain truths or facts. As regards holy Order we are able to note its progress : in the Acts of the Apostles and the *Didache* there is mention of little more than the election, prayer, and the imposition of hands ; the *Tradition of the Apostles* of Hippolytus is already more explicit, as we shall see presently ; lastly, the *Constitutiones Apostolicæ* and the *Testament of the Lord* contain a lengthy statement of the offices and duties of bishops and the other ministers.

Even heresy had something to do with these changes. There can be no doubt that the profession of faith demanded from the catechumens had for its end to teach them the dogmas of the Church and to guard them against the errors she condemns. The threefold immersion of the neophyte practised in some churches is an obvious profession of faith in the Trinity, in opposition to certain heresies. On the other hand, certain doctors reject it for fear of tritheism being thereby countenanced. The same holds good of other rites. Whenever it was desirable to emphasize some aspect of christian truth, that dogma was translated into ritual. As regards the sacrament of Order, there was a tendency to subdivide offices and to create new ones. We have just seen what circumstances led to the ordination of the first deacons. It is quite possible that in a small locality one bishop, with the help of a couple of deacons, was able to cope with the work. Or an Apostle, as for instance S. Paul, might remain at the head of several churches or govern them by his delegates. Discipline varied according to circumstances. Doorkeepers, readers, exorcists, acolytes, and subdeacons were instituted only as time went on and in churches where the numbers of the faithful demanded the services of these minor clerics. This demand led to their ordination as distinct from the priesthood.

In the middle of the third century the Roman Church was assuredly the most numerous, the most vigorous and the best organized of all. From a letter of Pope Cornelius (251–253) we learn that there were then in Rome forty-six priests, seven deacons, seven subdeacons, forty-two acolytes, and fifty-two minor clerics, that is exorcists, readers, and doorkeepers (Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.* VI, 43). Mention is also made of the *fossores* who made the roads in the catacombs and buried the dead ; of the *notarii*, or secretaries, whose special duty it was to write down the interrogatories to which the martyrs were subjected by the judges ; of the singers and other officials who all had some connexion with the hierarchy. The widows and virgins constituted a category by themselves and were the objects of the Church's solicitude. There also existed ascetics of both sexes notable for their fervour and austerity, but they formed themselves into communities only at a much later period.

Some other offices mentioned in the epistles of S. Paul and the earliest documents, such as those of the teachers, doctors, prophets, and certain itinerant ministers who went from one community to another, have disappeared or have been reabsorbed in the ranks of the official hierarchy.

The rites used at the ordination of these various officials are described in a number of documents of great importance for the history of the liturgy. Much light has been thrown on them by the scholars of the last fifty years. These sources are certain ecclesiastical canons or prescriptions which, under the title of *apostolic canons* or *constitutions*, for the most part claim to be of apostolic origin, though so remote a beginning cannot be proved with regard to any of them. Nevertheless, though we discover in them traces of a later composition and of accretions belonging to the fourth, and even to the fifth century, it is not rash to hold that some of these rituals or formularies belong to a period previous to Nicæa and in some instances even to the first years of the third century. This is certainly true of the *Didascalia* which date from the middle of the third century and of the oldest and strangest of all these ancient constitutions, the *Apostolic Tradition*, of which we have spoken repeatedly and whose author is S. Hippolytus. Much detailed information may be found in these documents.

Compared with the present rite, the ceremony of ordination is still very austere, but all the essential features are there.

A bishop is chosen by the whole community and all gather in church on the Sunday of the ordination. The bishops present—and they alone—perform the rite of the imposition of hands. One of their number, at the bidding of the rest, lays hands on the ordinand whilst reciting a prayer. This, like most prayers of the period, is an extempore one. That of S. Hippolytus is of his composition, like his Eucharistic *anaphora*, and like the latter it was adopted by many churches, though frequently with fresh additions.

It is addressed to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and of all consolation, who knows the hearts of men. He is asked to pour his grace upon the elect who will be called upon to offer sacrifice and to forgive sins. The ordinand receives the kiss of peace, he places his hand on the oblation and, together with all the priests present, he recites the *anaphora* of which we gave the text in the chapter on the Eucharist.

At the ordination of a priest, the bishop and the priests present lay their hands upon the head of the candidate and the bishop offers a short prayer *that God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, would give him his grace as he gave it to the priests chosen by Moses.*

In the ordination of a deacon, the bishop alone performs the imposition of hands because the deacon is ordained for the service of the bishop and is not incorporated in the presbyteral body. The laying-on of hands is followed by a short prayer.

In course of time this extremely simple ritual received many accretions. Rite was piled upon rite; all the offices of the candidate were singled out for special mention and formulas were multiplied. Generally speaking, one could easily give the date of these additions, some of which are later than the thirteenth century. Here more than anywhere else we have to bear in mind what was said of the Roman liturgy which, since the eighth and ninth century, has become a mixture of diverse elements. The ancient Roman liturgy, previous to that epoch, is more simple and more logical, but even beneath the additions it is possible to distinguish the essential elements, of which not a few go back to the pre-Nicene era. How many archaisms there are in our *Roman Pontifical*! how many allusions to ancient customs long passed into desuetude! The duties of doorkeepers, readers, exorcists, acolytes are identical with those carried out by the same clerics in the Church of Rome under Cornelius. The doorkeeper and the reader are still supposed to hold up the book of the gospels from which the pontiff selects a passage for his homily in the pulpit; theirs is the duty to announce the hours of divine service, for there were as yet no bells; the readers read the lessons from the *ambo*; the exorcist casts out devils; he imposes his hands on energumens (a trait all the more ancient as it is no longer found in the ritual of exorcism); he also calls out before the people that those who do not communicate must leave the church (before the Mass of the faithful); at his ordination he is handed a book containing the formulas to be used at exorcisms; as for the acolytes, stress is laid on their duty of lighting the candles and lamps of the church, a detail that, without doubt, takes us back to the time when this duty was carried out with some solemnity at the hour called *lucernarium*. S. Hippolytus in the third century refers to it in his *Apostolic Tradition*.

As regards the subdiaconate, the diaconate and the priesthood, the warnings and exhortations of the bishop to the candidates for these, the major orders, are marked by greater developments, precision, and diversity; they are altogether in a higher key. Here also we meet with rites with which we are already familiar since we find them in ante-Nicene documents: these are a litany with a prayer for holy Church—*ut Ecclesiam tuam sanctam regere et conservare digneris, te rogamus* . . . a preface also and the imposition of hands.

The Church—*Sancta Mater Ecclesia catholica*—presents to the bishop the candidates for the diaconate and the priesthood. The faithful who assist are invited to come forward should they have a serious objection to make against any of the candidates. The pontiff reminds all that it is meet and in accordance with the tradition of the Fathers ‘that the christian people should be consulted concerning the choice of those that are to be its rulers . . . for the master and the crew of a ship share the same fate, run the same risks ; hence it is reasonable that the passengers should know to what manner of captain they are entrusted.' This admonition, with only slight differences, is found in the *Constitutiones Apostolicæ.* The deacons are compared to the levites of the Old Law, the priests to the seventy-two ancients chosen by Moses.

These comparisons between the priesthood of the New Law and that of the Old are of very early date. We find them in Clement of Rome, in the *Didascalia*, Origen, and other writers.[1]

The imposition of hands on the head of the ordinands to the priesthood by the bishops and the priests present, is a survival of the rite of concelebration, which also dates from before Nicæa. Concelebration meant that the bishop and the priests celebrated all together, whilst the deacons and other ministers fulfilled their own respective offices. As a matter of fact, at the Mass which follows their ordination, the newly ordained concelebrate, that is, celebrate with the bishop.

No doubt the manifold rites and ceremonies in use to-day prove very puzzling to the outsider. But the ground-plan of the primitive liturgy is clearly seen if, at least in our mind, we remove the superstructures laid on it by later generations.

The rite called *porrectio instrumentorum*, which consists in making the doorkeeper touch the keys of the church, the reader the book of the epistles, the exorcist that of the exorcisms, the acolyte the candle and the cruets, the subdeacon the chalice and paten, the deacon the gospel book, the priest the chalice containing wine and water and the paten with the host ; the blessing of the vestments, viz. the maniple, the stole, the tunic, the dalmatic, the chasuble—all these rites, however ancient and venerable they may be, belong neither to the earliest period nor, perhaps, to the essence of the sacrament. Certain theologians of good standing have taught, quite recently, that the imposition of hands is the only essential rite of ordination, so that rites to which our Pontifical attaches so much solemnity, such as the anointing of the hands of the priest with the oil of the catechumens, that of bishops with the sacred chrism, and other rites, may not be essential. Such is also the conclusion we arrive at by a study of archæology and history. One thing that ought to be noted is that the social distinction between the laity and the clergy was less marked in the first centuries than it is to-day, although this seems to be at variance with the fact that bishops, priests, and deacons enjoyed at that time a much greater authority. This is accounted for by the conditions of the period. Before the peace of the Church in 312 removed the barriers which until then defended the Church from the inrush of neophytes of lower quality, the christians constituted a picked body which, notwithstanding its importance, was only a minority: the admission of fresh recruits was strictly controlled ; a close bond knit them together ; persecutions rendered their union even closer; they helped one another, supported one another, clung to one another; their foes accused them of forming a State within the State, and if the reproach was an exaggeration, it was quite true that they did constitute a closely united family. Did not Tertullian call the faithful the *sect of God—dumtaxat ex causa Dei sectæ ?* (Apol. 39).

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[1] Clem. Rom. XL–XLIV ; *Didascalia*, VIII and IX ; Origen, *in Jo.*, tom. 1, 3.

Christian missionaries, pilgrims, and travellers have already supplied us with instances of the state of affairs just described. A letter of recommendation from his bishop entitled a christian of that epoch to the hospitality of any christian household or to admission into one of the many hostelries which were created at an early date for the entertainment of such persons. To quote but one example, the apologist Aristides, in the second century, gives us a formal assurance that such was the custom. Hospitality to which we pay at least lip service, was the domestic virtue most warmly recommended to the faithful of that age and the one most loyally practised.

The liturgy provides us with yet another proof of this homely charity. A service in a modern church, especially in a big town, cannot give an idea of a similar gathering in the early church. A modern congregation is made up, for the most part, of people who are utter strangers to each other, who take no interest in each other, and, only too often, their lack of interest applies even to what goes on at the altar. It was otherwise in those days. Then the sacred function was a truly corporate act in which all, clergy and people alike, took their respective part.

In those days the Mass, the central act of religion, is also a social act. As a rule there is but one Mass in one church only and it brings together the bishop and clergy and the faithful. When, as was the case in Rome, there are several churches in a place, care is taken to keep up the unity of prayer and communion by means of the *fermentum* and other devices. All listen attentively and join in the prayers of the priest which, as a matter of fact, are said in the name of all. Nor does the priest begin without first greeting the faithful with the word: '*The Lord be with you*,' to which they reply: '*And with thy spirit*.' Everyone has brought bread and wine for the consecration. All partake of the Eucharist, which is even taken to the absent. The Church—*ecclesia*—is truly the universal Church or assembly of the faithful—bishops, priests, people. The words which recur so often in our liturgy—*plebs tua*, *ecclesia tua*, *familia tua*, *populus tuus*, *thy people*, *thy church*, *thy family*, *thy nation*, which to-day make so little impression on our distracted minds, are then taken literally.

The sacrifice is the sacrifice of all; Baptism is a sacrament of which all the faithful are the witnesses; the catechumens are known to them; during Lent they have undergone a special preparation at which all the faithful were present; their Baptism, during the night of Easter, is a feast for the whole community which watches the various phases of the ritual; even penance—at least public penance—interests all, for they plead on behalf of the penitent, they beg the bishop to readmit him to communion. As we have seen, they take an important part in the ordination of the deacons and the priests who are to be their leaders. In the prayer in the form of a litany recited on Good Friday we read: '*Let us pray for all bishops, priests, deacons, subdeacons, acolytes, exorcists, readers, doorkeepers, confessors, virgins, and widows, and for the entire holy people of God. Let us bend the knees.*'

The bishop is chosen by the people. Everybody knows that in the fourth and fifth and even in the third century some of these elections gave rise, at Rome and elsewhere, to regular seditions, so that the authorities of the Church felt obliged to curtail this privilege. But during the first three centuries such excesses were rare and as a rule votes went to the best and worthiest. Once the bishop is consecrated, no one questions his authority over the people. In 1551, on the road to Tivoli (*via Tiburtina*), a marble statue was found representing a personage clad in the toga and seated upon a kind of consular chair—*sedes curulis*. On the sides of the chair was carved the catalogue of the books written by him. It was Hippolytus, a bishop at Rome in the third century, one of the great men of that period but unhappily led by his ambition into schism. There exist other episcopal chairs of great antiquity, which prove more eloquently than any other witness, that in those days a bishop was looked up to as one who teaches and governs his church. S. Peter's chair, preserved in

Rome, is famous and the two feasts in its honour, on January 18 and February 22, are of fairly early date.

When Tertullian urges against the heretics his famous argument from *prescription* he says : ‘ Come now, thou that wilt exercise thy curiosity in the business of thy salvation ; go through the apostolic churches in which the very seats of the apostles, at this very day, preside over their own places, in which their own authentic writings are read. Is Achaia near to thee ? thou hast Corinth. If thou art not far from Macedonia, thou hast Philippi, thou hast the Thessalonians. If thou canst travel into Asia, thou hast Ephesus. But if thou art near to Italy, thou hast Rome, where we also (the Africans) have an authority close at hand.’ Then follows this magnificent eulogy of the Roman Church : ‘ What a happy church is that, in which the apostles poured out all their doctrine with their blood ! where Peter had a like passion with the Lord ; where Paul hath for his crown the same death with John (the Baptist) ; where the Apostle John was plunged into boiling oil and suffered nothing. . . . Let us see what she hath learned, what taught. . . .’ [*De Præscript.*, XXXVI, translated by C. Dodgson (Library of the Fathers), p. 469].

The other orders, especially the diaconate, assign to the candidate functions that create a strong link with the people. Deacons take the Holy Eucharist to the sick, act as messengers, bishops entrust them with letters for distant parts ; they announce the days and hours when the *synaxis* takes place ; they keep order at those gatherings, they act as masters of the ceremonies, and give out the word of command almost in military fashion : *let us bend our knees ; arise ; bow your heads ; be silent ; listen to the reading. . . .* The duties of the reader are of the same kind. S. Cyprian repeatedly eulogizes the office of the reader who goes up to the pulpit or *ambo*, where he is seen by all, in order to perform his function of *lector.* He reads the books of the Old and the New

Testament; he reads the gospel of Christ; for it was only at a later period that this duty was reserved to the deacon. The reader must see to it that his life does not contradict the things he reads. It is almost in these very terms that to this day the *Pontificale Romanum*, inspired, it would seem, by S. Cyprian's writings, exhorts the lectors to carry out their duties.[1] In the same way the office of the exorcists and doorkeepers demands from them a good deal of authority.

Thus, without authority losing any of its rights, there exists a very close relationship between all—between clergy and people alike.

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[1] Cf. our article, *Afrique* (Liturgie de l'), in D.A.C.L., col. 611.

CHAPTER VI

MATRIMONY

CHRIST himself reformed the law of Moses by abolishing the relaxation it had introduced, thereby restoring to matrimony its unity and indissolubility which, in the New Law, are its indispensable conditions (Matt. v, 31 ff.; Mark x, 9; 1 Cor. vii, 39; Eph. v, 22–32). The Apostles, and S. Paul in particular, all strive to maintain the sublime ideal of christian matrimony, the symbol of the union between Christ and his Church. Again and again they lay down the duties of husband and wife and the obligations of family life; all the more as some very delicate problems had arisen, notably the case of one of the parties becoming a christian whilst the other remained a pagan.

We cannot believe—and Dobschütz himself agrees with us—that so important a transaction was accomplished without the blessing of some sacred rite, since even the most ordinary actions ought to be done *in the name of the Lord*, according to the counsel of the Apostle: 'All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him' (Col. iii, 17).

However, in this matter also we have to wait till the century of Tertullian who, with his keen sense of supernatural realities and in his vigorous style, sings this union of two beings sharing a common life, a common hope, submitting to a common discipline. 'How can we find words to describe that marriage which the Church joineth together, and the oblation confirmeth, and the blessing sealeth, the angels report, the Father ratifieth ? '[1]

This oblation of which Tertullian here speaks makes us think at once of the Mass at the moment of the offertory, because this was the moment when the oblations were made. The nuptial blessing was given during the Mass, which, as we have stated already, is the centre of gravity of the whole ritual. It has even been suggested that the oblation was the earnest-money offered by the husband, a custom usually observed at the conclusion of contracts, especially at marriages.

What ritual accompanied the nuptial blessing ? In all probability it consisted in the imposition of hands. Clement of Alexandria thus apostrophizes christian women who wear false hair : 'When the priest lays his hands on your head, what does he bless ? Hair that is not your own and whose origin is unknown ! ' This text has been taken, with some show of reason, as being an allusion to the nuptial blessing.

Tertullian adds an interesting detail. In those days the christian community represented by the bishop, the priests, deacons and widows, claimed the right to sanction any matrimonial project between two christians or to condemn it if it did not offer sufficient guarantees (*De Pudic.*, IV ; *Monog.*, XI). Already in the second century S. Ignatius alludes to the intervention of the bishop in such matters (*ad Polycarp.*, V) and there exist several examples of it in the fourth century.

From other writers of the period we see that the nuptial rite included at times the use of the veil, white garments, the ring, and even the bridal crown—rites that are all borrowed from the customs of the period. But the use of a crown, to which Clement of Alexandria alludes, is condemned by more austere writers, such as Justin and Tertullian, who feared lest it should recall pagan memories. However, the Jews had adopted it already and it ended by establishing itself among the christians, so much so that the liturgy accepted it and even gave it a certain amount of solemnity. But this ceremonial is of a somewhat later date. The contracting parties also clasped each other's hand and exchanged the kiss of peace.[1]

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[1] *Ad uxor.*, IX (*Library of the Fathers*), p. 430.

Archæology also contributes its small stone to this reconstruction of history. Inscriptions, reliefs, sculptures, and more particularly cups (or rather the bottom of cups) which have been collected, complete the picture of christian matrimony. Two clasped hands are the symbol of the union of the two parties; the monogram of Christ above the emblem recalls the words of S. Paul: 'Let a woman marry, if she is so minded; only let it be in the Lord.' At times Christ is seen himself placing the crowns on their heads; underneath is the legend: 'Live in God,' or 'in Christ.'

Epitaphs carefully collected by epigraphists bear witness to the fidelity and other virtues of christian couples. All this shows that the christians of that period loyally carried out the exhortation of S. Paul: 'Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord. . . . Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church and delivered himself up for it, that he might sanctify it. . . . So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh. . . . For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament: but I speak in Christ and in the Church. . . . Nevertheless let every one of you in particular love his wife as himself; and let the wife fear the husband.'[1]

Now it must be borne in mind that on the one hand the Church had to fight against the licentiousness of paganism which, by allowing divorce, undermined the existence of family life and was generally exceedingly lax in all that appertains to chastity : on the other hand she had to contend with certain heretics who preached an inhuman asceticism and condemned marriage : such was the teaching of certain Manichæan, gnostic, and Montanist sects. When defeated on this point by the very definite teaching of Christ, of S. Paul and the great doctors, the rigorists entered upon a campaign against remarriage. This was Tertullian's first step on the road to heresy. His pamphlet against second nuptials, entitled *De Monogamia*, is a masterpiece of biting sarcasm, but here, as elsewhere, his intractableness is excessive and the Church could do no other than condemn his views. Whilst extending her protection to virgins and ascetics who consecrated themselves unreservedly to Christ, she continued to honour christian matrimony and to maintain the laws that govern family life.

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[1] Tertull., *De virg. vel.*, XI.

CHAPTER VII

THE SICK—THE DEAD

IN the primitive Church the sick and infirm, the orphans, the poor, the widows, in a word those in affliction, were the objects of special care on the part of the heads of the community. We need not stop here in order to prove this assertion, because examples of such solicitude may be seen in the books that deal professedly with the matter. We have to consider the sick solely in their relation to the liturgy.

In all litanies—the most usual form of primitive prayer—intercession is made for the sick, for travellers, for prisoners, for those toiling in the mines, for all those in any kind of need. The prayer of Good Friday already quoted, which possibly dates back to the very earliest period, is thus phrased: 'Let us pray, dearly beloved brethren, to God the Father Almighty, that he may deign to purge the world of all errors, cure diseases, drive away famine, open prisons, break chains, grant a safe return to travellers, health to the sick and a secure haven to such as are at sea.' In these words we hear an echo of what is called 'the prayer of the faithful,' which formerly was recited in all liturgies, before the anaphora (offertory). The *Apostolic Constitutions* also have a prayer 'for our sick brethren, that God may deliver them from their illness and restore them whole and sound to his holy Church' (viii, 10).

In another prayer of our Missal, namely among the prayers of preparation for Mass, there is one which enumerates all the miseries that fall to the lot of poor humanity, the trials of nations and the dangers that threaten them, the groans of prisoners, the needs of orphans, the perils of wayfarers; nor are the sick forgotten, for the priests remember their sadness and discouragement and the infirmities of the old.[1]

The Eucharist is carried to the houses of the sick, usually by the deacons, but in case of need even by simple lay folk. A word borrowed from classical Greek—*ἐφόδιον*—meaning any kind of provision carried by a traveller, has been christened and given the special signification of provision for the last journey of all, that is death. The Latin word *viaticum* has the same meaning. This custom of taking the Eucharist to the sick, especially at the approach of death, is attested by several texts which have been carefully collected. The incident related by Denys of Alexandria is well known. Here it is:

A christian of Alexandria, a certain Serapion, having been taken seriously ill, asked his young son to go out and call a priest. Now Serapion, who, as a matter of fact, had led a good life, had had the misfortune, during the persecution of Decius, of sacrificing to the idols, as so many other christians had done. He was therefore ranked among the *lapsi* and cut off from communion with the rest of the faithful. Towards evening the boy found a priest, but he being sick himself, gave the child a small piece of the Eucharistic bread, telling him at the same time to dip it in water so that the old man might swallow it more easily. The child did as he was told, and Serapion having received Holy Communion at his hand, expired a few moments later. All this is quite in keeping with contemporary church discipline.[1] Ordinarily, however, it was the deacons' duty to carry the Eucharist. S. Justin speaks of it in two places. At times the duty was not devoid of risk, especially when there was question of martyrs in prison. These confessors had the greatest need of all to be strengthened by the Holy Eucharist for the supreme struggle. The story of S. Tarcisius who met his death on such an errand is universally known. The council of Elvira which still belongs to the period of which we are treating (about A.D. 300) allows Communion to be given to the sick, even to energumens, but ordains that it must be refused, even on his death-bed, to a christian guilty of having sacrificed to idols, even if he is penitent. Here we have an instance of severity exceeding that of the Alexandrian priest who, in fact, was only carrying out the instructions of his bishop. Such strictness was deemed excessive and the councils of the fourth century grant the viaticum to all who are in danger of death, without any exception whatever, provided they are penitent.

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[1] The text, which is probably very ancient, deserves to be quoted: '*Profero etiam Domine (si digneris propitius intueri) tribulationes plebium, pericula populorum, captivorum gemitus, miserias orphanorum, necessitates peregrinorum, inopiam debilium, desperationes languentium, defectus senum, suspiria juvenum, vota virginum, lamenta viduarum.*' *Orationes ante missam, feria IV*. Cf. on this passage the note in Gore-Turner: *The Church and the Ministry*, 1919, pp. 72, 73, and Dom Wilmart, *Revue Bénédict.*, t. XXXIX, p. 333.

This question of Holy Communion being taken to the sick brings us to two points which are still the object of heated controversies among Protestants. The first is that Communion in the form of viaticum presupposes that the Eucharist was reserved after Mass so as to be available in an emergency. On studying the question more closely we find that not only was the Eucharist reserved for the benefit of the sick but that, moreover, the faithful were allowed to take it home in order to communicate themselves on days on which there was no synaxis. Tertullian speaks of mysterious food which a christian wife consumes secretly and reverently before all other food and blames those who, from an exaggerated scrupulosity and in order not to break their fast, took the Eucharist with them in order to consume it after the expiration of the period of fasting. He is in full accord with Origen and other writers of the time, as well as with the various ecclesiastical prescriptions, when he urges the people to keep this heavenly food with the utmost care. Cyprian mentions the precious caskets or boxes in which it used to be kept. The purpose of the practice was to facilitate daily communion at a time when Mass was often celebrated only on Sunday and on the days on which there was a *statio*—viz. Wednesday and Friday. However, the abuses or negligences to which the custom was apt to give rise brought about its suppression at an early date. Nevertheless we find traces of it in the fourth century and even beyond that date.

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[1] Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.* VI, 44. Cf. Batiffol, *L'Eucharistie*, edit. 1913, pp. 288, 289.

Another tradition brought to light by this custom and one often vehemently attacked by heretics, is that already at that time Communion under only one kind was held to be perfectly lawful.

In all the instances quoted there is question of the Eucharistic bread alone, though it was customary to give the sacrament to the faithful under both kinds. Communion under only one kind was often a necessity. Thus, the liturgical practice of that early period supplies us with a conclusive argument in our controversies with Protestants.

If the Eucharist is the most powerful comfort the Church gives to the sick, it is not the only one. We read in the Gospel that when the apostles were sent out by our Lord on their first mission, they 'anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them' (Mark vi, 13). And S. James speaks even more clearly: 'Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him' (James v. 14, 15).

This text, the authenticity of which is incontestable, shows clearly, notwithstanding certain interpretations, that there is an unction with oil for the sick, made *in the name of Christ*—a formula so rich in meaning in those days—accompanied by prayer, and that this rite procures spiritual and bodily help for the sick man, and that it blots out sins.

In the ecclesiastical canons to which we refer so frequently, beginning with the *Apostolic Tradition* of S. Hippolytus, mention is made of the oil of the sick and of the exorcisms and blessings of which it is the object. Hence the ceremony of Maundy Thursday, that is, the blessing of the oil of the sick, the oil of the catechumens and the sacred chrism, rests on a most ancient tradition.

Those chapters of the Roman ritual of to-day which deal with the visitation and the care of the sick and the prayers to be said for the dying are also of great antiquity, at least in part. The allusion to the prophets of the Old Law whom God rescued from death or helped in their distress, such as Abraham, Lot, Daniel, and the young men in the furnace, Susanna, and especially the mention of the famous martyr S. Thecla, are details borrowed from the Acts of the Martyrs or the inscriptions and frescoes of the Catacombs. They recall the prayers by which the christians prepared for martyrdom.

THE DEAD

The dead were the object of the Church's solicitude from the beginning. What was their condition whilst they awaited the resurrection ? The christians of Thessalonica consulted S. Paul on the question and two letters of his were written in answer to their inquiries.

We must not forget that among the early christians there were many who looked from day to day for the second coming of Christ. This was the great preoccupation of some of them ; they thought the Lord's return would not be delayed and it may be that the idea which originally prompted the institution of *vigils* was that, since this event was to take place in the middle of the night, it behoved them to await it in watching and prayer. In the end the apostles had to remind them that the end of the world is known to no man, and that before God, a thousand years is as one day.

What is to be the lot of those who die before that date? S. Paul counsels the Thessalonians to put aside all anxiety: if Christ died and rose again, God will likewise raise those who die in the faith. The dead are waiting in their graves; they repose and sleep there, hence the word dormitory, *κοιμήριον, cemetery*, which was current at the beginning of the third century (Philosoph. ix, 7), and is assuredly one of the most expressive words of the christian vocabulary. There the body rests whilst awaiting the resurrection. In order to grasp the full bearing of these facts we must remember that, unlike the deist, a christian is not satisfied with the immortality of the soul alone. He desires that the body which toiled and laboured in union with the soul should also have its reward—that it should come back to life. This he wishes and believes, because it has been promised to him and his aspirations are grounded on logic and reason as well as on revelation. If our body, so intimately linked to the soul, and through which it has loved, joyed, thought, suffered, is hopelessly condemned to the lamentable end, the nameless degradation which is slowly wrought in the silence of the tomb, surely something would be wanting to the happiness of the immortal soul and, if I may say so, justice itself would not be satisfied. At any rate death would triumph and S. Paul's: 'O death, where is thy sting? O death, where is thy victory?' would be given the lie in a most cruel fashion. Did not Christ rise again? S. Paul never misses an opportunity of linking the christian's resurrection to that of Christ as a natural consequence. Thus the grave is a christian's resting-place whilst he awaits the resurrection.

A pagan may scoff at such a hope, or repeat what the Athenians said to S. Paul: 'We will hear thee again concerning this matter' (Acts xviii, 32); but a christian replies with Theophilus, Tertullian, and other writers of the second and third century who were much exercised by this problem, that if the body of man made in God's image does not rise again, his end is not different from that of the beasts. Materialists and atheists being excepted, all who believe in God must agree, in their hearts, with the last article of the creed in which the resurrection of the body is proclaimed.

The last article of the creed, however, did not prevent a christian from believing that the soul is able to attain to God at the moment of death, whatever may be the lot of the body. Many proofs of this conviction could be produced. They are summed up in S. Paul's: 'Having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, *a thing by far the better* . . .' (Phil. i, 23), and in the stirring accents of S. Ignatius and other martyrs.

These principles, which it was necessary to state and of which we find the expression in the documents of that period, explain the whole christian attitude towards the dead.

In the process of being handed down to us this ritual, like many others, has been loaded with a great many prayers and ceremonies. But if we study these funeral rites as a whole, we find at every step the faith of the primitive age and at times certain archaisms that take us back to the period before Nicea.

The body of a christian is treated with reverence. Cremation, then in use among the pagans, is deemed by the faithful of that time a kind of sacrilege. Thus we see the mangled body of the deacon Stephen, who was stoned by the Jews, reverently carried to the grave amid the tears and prayers of his brethren in the faith (Acts viii, 2). A christian of that period deemed it a misfortune if his body were to remain unburied. Bishop Abercius built himself a tomb during his lifetime, and in the epitaph he himself composed—one of the most curious documents of the third century—he asks that no other body be placed above his own. The poor were buried at the expense of the ecclesiastical treasury (Tertul., *Apol.* 39). The *fossores*—grave-diggers—have been looked upon by some as members of the hierarchy. No doubt the *loculi* scooped out of the walls of the Catacombs, were modest enough sepultures, still the dead reposed there in a silence and peace only interrupted, from time to time, by the prayers and chants of the faithful. It was because they were well acquainted with the feelings of the christians that the persecutors or the executioners sometimes cast the bodies of the martyrs into the sewers. But these were exceptional cases, for in this respect the christians enjoyed the liberty and respect which the Roman code extended to the dead. If, as has long been thought, the christians did not constitute *funeral colleges*, it is nevertheless certain that they often benefited by the privileges enjoyed by these associations. Thus nothing prevented them from bestowing upon the bodies of the dead such care as was then customary. They wrapped them in winding bands, sprinkled them with perfumes and aromatic herbs, and so carried them to the grave, enfolded in a winding sheet, just as was done for our Lord himself. It was possible, at times, even at the height of a persecution, to carry a dead body in procession through the streets of Rome, amid burning torches, to the chant of psalms and perhaps, even as to-day, amid the clouds of burning incense. At the entrance of some Roman cemeteries, that of Domitilla for instance, we see a large hall or *triclinium* where it was possible for all to meet for a funeral repast or *agape* from which gladness was by no means absent, for we could make no greater mistake than to picture to ourselves the obsequies of the christians of that age as surrounded with the sadness and gloom which to-day seem to be the fitting accompaniment of such ceremonies. ‘ Good for the pagans who are without hope ’ a christian of the period would have said. For christians, joy was the dominant feeling even at this kind of ceremony. They turned it into a triumph, especially at the funeral of a martyr, for this was his *dies natalis*, the true birthday of a christian whose home is heaven. Even the *Alleluia* was sung at these functions. In the Middle Ages other ideas prevailed and the Church, not without reason, deemed it expedient to recall to the mind of the people of that age of iron the terrors of the divine judgement, hence from that time onward the funeral liturgy, in the *Dies iræ* and other chants of the same kind, expresses sentiments of terror and awe.

The inscriptions in the christian cemeteries and the epitaphs, many of which date back before Nicea, are most instructive : *Timothea, mayst thou enjoy everlasting light in Christ! Irene, mayst thou live in Christ! Innocent soul, mayst thou live in God! Mayst thou live with the saints in peace!*

Peace, repose, light, joy in Christ are the most frequently recurring requests. Certain archæologists exaggerate when they affirm that *all* the frescoes of the Catacombs are meant to remind the beholder of death and the resurrection ; but it is true that not a few of them, such as the phœnix, the raising of Lazarus, even banqueting scenes, are symbols of the resurrection, of immortality and of the joys of heaven.

Nor are the dead out of mind once their bodies are out of sight. Graves are visited : numerous *loculi* in the Catacombs bear marks or names which served no other purpose than that of enabling relations and friends to identify them. The dead were prayed for : some of the inscriptions request the prayers of parents and friends ; thus Abercius, whose epitaph we have already mentioned, relies on the prayers of all who may pass by his tomb. The epitaph of Pectorius found in Autun in 1839, which with that of Abercius is one of the gems of christian epigraphy, deserves to be transcribed :

'*Heavenly race of the divine ichthus*,[1] *let thy heart be comforted since thou hast received amid mortals the immortal source of the divine water. Friend, let thy soul be gladdened by the unfailing water of wisdom that yields treasures. Partake of this, dish sweet as honey, of the Saviour of the saints ; eat with delight holding Ichthus in thy hands.*

Mayst thou still thy hunger with Ichthus, our Master and Saviour. Light of the dead, I beseech thee, grant to my mother sweet repose.

Ascandius, thou father most dear to my heart, with my sweet mother and my brothers, in the peace of Ichthus, be mindful of Pectorius.'

Here we see, in popular phraseology and under a symbolism that to a reader of the twentieth century may appear affected, a profession of faith in the power of the dead to intercede for the living.

It was natural to invoke more particularly the martyrs whose intercession was deemed all-powerful since they had endured prison, torments, and death for Christ's sake. But, as we learn from the instance of Pectorius, these petitions were addressed even to the simple faithful who had died in the Lord. Mass was celebrated on the anniversary of their death—both Tertullian and S. Cyprian speak of such commemorations. Tertullian, an opponent of second nuptials, argues thus : 'If a widow marries again, will she dare to offer the sacrifice for her deceased husband with the full knowledge of his successor ? and in like manner a husband for his first wife ? ' (*De monog.*, XI). In some chambers or *cubicula* of the Catacombs, the tomb of a martyr has the shape of an altar on which the sacrifice was offered. In addition to the anniversary, and as if impatient of so long a delay, they fixed certain other days, nearer to that of the death, for these funeral services, namely, the third, seventh, ninth, thirtieth, or fortieth, as we ourselves do to-day and as the pagans already did at least in part. As regards obsequies, just as for marriage and other old and universal customs, which, as a matter of fact, had no dogmatic bearing, the Church was tolerant and reserved her strictures for grave abuses. A few other customs, such as the anointing of the dead, the kiss of peace given to the corpse, the Eucharist and even Baptism given to the dead, all abuses already condemned by S. Paul, may have been looked upon as local customs, and tolerated for a time by the Church. Shortly before Constantine a council forbade the lighting of candles in cemeteries during the daytime, and a number of bishops sought to suppress the repasts given on the occasion of funerals, which at times led to excesses.

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[1] The divine *ichthus* (fish) is Christ, each of the letters of the word *ichthus*, fish, being an initial of 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour' in the Greek tongue.

The prayers in the form of a litany which were formerly said at the offertory of the Mass and are of very remote antiquity, contain a supplication for the dead after the prayer for the Church, for bishops and the catechumens. Among the solemn prayers of Good Friday, practically the only vestige, in the Roman liturgy, of the former 'prayer of the faithful,' there is no supplication for the dead. The reason of this omission is that when these prayers definitively took their present form, the *memento* of the departed already had its place in the Canon of the Mass.

What has been said shows that the christian cult of the departed bears many analogies to that of the martyrs : as a matter of fact it is only a question of degree. If a christian who departs this life in the faith of the Church deserves to be treated with reverence, and if he may be invoked in the hope that he is already with God, it stands to reason that a martyr and confessor of the Faith is entitled to even greater honours, nay, to a real cult.

In the absence of prayers and liturgical formulas for the dead which could be ascribed with certainty to the first centuries, an attempt has been made, with the utmost ingenuity, to show that some of our prayers belong to that epoch, such as the *Requiem æternam*, the *Lux perpetua*, the prayers of the *recommendation* of a soul and other texts borrowed from the apocryphal Book IV of Esdras which soon fell into disuse. We mention these efforts because the result seems to us highly probable, but we do not insist, since, after all, the whole thing is conjectural. But we may point out that some of these formulas, such as the *Subvenite*, retain something of the sense of joy and triumph which we noticed in the funeral inscriptions and the epitaphs of the Catacombs. S. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians to console them for the death of their brethren, sounds a similar note: 'Be not sorrowful even as others who have no hope' (1 Thess. iv, 12).

CHAPTER VIII

IMPOSITION OF HANDS. THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

(1)

MAN expresses his emotions and thoughts not only by the spoken word but also by gestures. These are often more eloquent than words and in some way underline, as it were, his speech and complete it. So it is not to be wondered at that the liturgy, in addition to addressing God in words, should frequently make use of certain actions or gestures. The philosopher who, on the plea of fostering a more spiritual worship, would condemn or banish these acts, only shows his ignorance of human nature. Seeing that our nature is made up of the close union of soul and body, it would surely be strange that when our spirit communes with God, the body should be forbidden all external participation, and that it should be, as it were, isolated or kept at a distance during the time of prayer.

The Catholic Church being by her very definition universal, aims at gathering within her fold all men, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, and she entertains no desire to be a select body made up of a handful of superior people who would keep themselves serenely aloof from the ordinary ways of humanity. Such was the ambition of the gnostics during the first centuries, and everybody knows how miserably they failed.

When speaking of the sacraments we have often mentioned the imposition of hands, unctions, blessings, and the sign of the cross. It will be useful to treat of all these liturgical gestures in one chapter, to trace their origin and to point out their meaning.

The most important and the most frequent of these gestures, in the ante-Nicene liturgy, is the imposition of hands. It consists in extending both hands, or according to the more common practice of the early Church, one hand, the right one, over a person or a thing. The gesture is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament. In the act of sacrificing, the priest placed his hand on the head of the victim before he slew it; the high priest extends both hands over the scapegoat, in order to lay on it the sins of Israel, after which it was driven into the wilderness. Blessings were given by the imposition of hands; priests and levites were consecrated in this way. Of Josue we read: 'And Josue, the son of Nun, was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands upon him' (Deut. xxxiv, 9). On the other hand, the same gesture condemns a blasphemer: he is led outside the camp, the witnesses who heard the blasphemy raise their hands over his head and he is stoned. The raised hand also accompanies the biblical oath. *The hand of God*, *the right hand of the Lord*, are synonyms of the power of God or of its exercise.

Ethnographers are not agreed as to the meaning of the gesture. Some are of opinion that it signifies a transmission of power or gifts as well as of sin or responsibility. Etymologically (χειροτονία) it signifies the outstretched hand pointing out a candidate. But whatever may have been the original meaning of the action, it is more natural and logical to distinguish its signification according as the hand is imposed in order to bless, or to invest with authority, or to dedicate a person or thing to God's service, to lay the burden of sin upon a victim that is substituted for the entire people, to condemn or to curse.

The New Testament makes frequent mention of the imposition of hands : thus Jairus asks our Lord : ‘ Come, lay thy hand upon her (my daughter) that she may be safe and may live ’ (Mark v, 23). Jesus declares that the apostles shall restore the sick to health by the imposition of their hands. When the Gospel tells us that he blessed the loaves we may take it that it was by extending his hand. When the little children were presented to him, he blessed them by laying his hands on them and as he rose into heaven, ‘ lifting up his hands he blessed them ’ (Luke xxiv, 50). Like their Master, the apostles heal the sick by the imposition of hands. Perhaps we have to understand in this sense the words of the Acts : ‘ By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought ’ (Acts v, 12). It is thus they imparted the Holy Ghost : ‘ they laid their hands upon them and they received the Holy Ghost ’ (*ibid.* v. 17). What we read concerning Simon Magus is very much to the point. When he saw that by the imposition of hands the apostles communicated the Holy Ghost, he sought to buy from them a like power.

These and other examples that could be quoted show that the apostles were taught this rite by our Lord himself and that it was by them transmitted to the Church, so there can be no question of the ceremony having been borrowed from pagan rituals. In the primitive Church the imposition of hands was of much more frequent occurrence than it is in the liturgy of to-day. Blessings, dedications to God, ordinations, the transmission of power or of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, absolution, at times even maledictions and exorcisms were accompanied by the imposition of hands. Among the monuments of primitive christian art we find several examples. One of the most remarkable is that of a man in a standing position, stretching forth his hands towards a tripod on which is placed a dish of food whilst a woman by his side raises her hands in the customary attitude of prayer (Catacomb of Callistus).

The texts of the Old and the New Testament we have quoted speak now of the imposition of the hand, now of both hands. The same diversity obtains in later documents, though the use of the singular becomes more frequent. However, when one hand only is imposed it is invariably the right hand that is clearly indicated or taken for granted. The ceremonial of the Church has consecrated this law of the right hand which we find universally established as one of the religious customs of all peoples. Our word *sinister*, that is, unlucky, alarming, etc., means simply that the left was supposed to bring misfortune. Lastly, there are the words of S. Paul, later on inserted in the creed : ‘ Christ is sitting at the right hand of God ’ (Col. iii, 1).

Though less in use than in the first centuries, the imposition of hands still holds an important place in Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Ordination, and some other ceremonies.

(2)

One reason why this gesture is less in use in our present liturgy is that another and most sacred one has been substituted for it—viz. the *sign of the cross.*

It is easy to understand the deep impression the memory of the sufferings and death on the cross of our Lord must have made upon the apostles and disciples. We need only think of the place occupied in the Gospels by the recital of the last hours of our Lord’s earthly life or some of the cries wrung from the heart of S. Paul : ‘ With Christ I am nailed to the cross ’ (Gal. ii, 19) ; ‘ God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ ’ (*ibid.* vi, 14), and of so many inscriptions in the Catacombs which, in one form or another, reveal to the initiated the emblem of the cross. This did not escape the attention of the enemies of the Church. One such—probably a page of the emperor—scratched on the wall of one of the rooms of the Palatine, the figure of one crucified, but having an ass's head, before which a christian is seen in the attitude of prayer, and lest anyone should fail to see what was meant, the following legend is also scratched on the wall : *Alexamenos adores his God.*[1] Christian writers, for instance Justin, Minucius Felix, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, eagerly look for the symbol of the cross in the world around them ; they find it in a bird in flight which spreads out its wings in the shape of a cross, or in the mast and main-yard of a ship ; in the letter *Tau* (T), which is really a cross, and in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden.

Tertullian supplies us with a very striking text : 'At every forward step and movement, at every going in and out, when we put on our clothes and shoes, when we bathe, when we sit at table, when we light the lamps, on couch, on seat, in all the ordinary actions of daily life, we trace upon the forehead the sign of the cross' (*De cor. mil.*, 3, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. XI). And this is not the only time he refers to it. After him S. Cyprian, some martyrs, and many Fathers, especially from the fourth century onwards, often speak of the sign of the cross.

In those days it consisted in tracing the sign of the cross on the forehead, on the breast, and on various objects. We still do so at the gospel, at Compline, at various unctions and blessings and for private devotion, especially in certain countries in Spain for instance.

Our usual sign of the cross, from the forehead to the breast and from the left to the right shoulder is of later date. There is no trace of it before the eighth century. The words we use : *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* are a doxology in honour of the Trinity, but so far no one has been able to prove that it was in use before Nicea. Were any words uttered when the sign of the cross was made ? There is no mention of them in Tertullian or anywhere else. We should like to think that the formula '*in the name of the Lord* or *in the name of Christ*,' so frequent in the first centuries and to which we shall refer again, was accompanied by the sign of the cross ; it is likely enough that it was so, but we cannot show that it is more than a conjecture.[1]

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[1] Cf. D.A.C.L., *Croix et Crucifix.*

At any rate the sign of the cross was destined to become the most frequent liturgical gesture and already S. Augustine assures us that it is used in the administration of all sacraments.

It is easy to account for the hold it took on the christian heart from the very first. It is the sign of salvation and a constant reminder of the saving Passion and death of Christ. The cult of the cross, whose roots are thus in the very rock of Calvary, was destined to undergo in subsequent ages up to our own times the most magnificent developments. We need not wonder that it should be so constantly used by christians, since in the course of time it also became a profession of faith in the three divine Persons.

(3)

Another liturgical gesture, whose place in our present ritual is a very modest one, viz. the kiss of peace, had much greater importance in the early centuries. The kiss was used by the Jews as by most other peoples. Christ reproaches Simon, the pharisee, with having failed to give him the kiss of peace, and Judas' kiss, by which he singled out Jesus to those who came to arrest him, shows that this symbol was in frequent use between our Lord and his apostles.

The kiss, which is usually looked upon as a token of friendship, benevolence, affection, and reconciliation, seems to put on, in S. Paul's writings, a new character of brotherhood and charity among christians, so that it is no longer merely a sign of affection but an expression of fellow-feeling and of a common faith. In his epistles we find often, and in those of S. Peter once, expressions like the following: '*Salute one another with a holy kiss*' (Rom. xvi, 20). The *holy kiss*, the *kiss of charity*, or the *kiss of peace*, became a liturgical rite among christians at an early date.

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[1] What I thought was no more than a supposition now seems to me an established fact, the proof being this verse of Commodian : *Et* (signo) *signat populum in nomine Christi.* (Cf. *Corpus script. lat.*, vol. XV, p. 169.)

S. Justin says that the faithful exchange the kiss of peace at the end of the litany, before the oblation. The kiss is also mentioned in connexion with Baptism. Tertullian calls it the *signaculum orationis*, the seal of prayer, and if, in the opinion of some archæologists, the prayer spoken of is the Lord's Prayer, it was a kind of translation into action of the petition: '*forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.*' So the kiss would have a clearly defined liturgical meaning. It is also most specifically christian, for I do not think it is found elsewhere with a similar signification. It is one of the most striking expressions of the charity, the intimacy and likewise of the purity of life of the early christians. It was only at a later date that scruples arose, and rules had to be drawn up to forestall abuses. Even Renan states that this holy liberty was a proof of the simplicity 'of that golden age of liberty.' In a well-known passage he exclaims: 'Away with all vile suspicions of vulgar sensuality! All was pure in this holy liberty, but also how pure one had to be to enjoy it!' Christian writers such as Athenagoras point out possible abuses, and in his enumeration of the disadvantages of a marriage between a christian and a pagan, Tertullian asks: 'With what eye will a pagan husband look at his wife kissing the chains of a martyr in prison or giving to a brother the kiss of peace?" (*ad uxor.* II, 4). As a matter of fact the separation of the sexes at all liturgical assemblies was established at an early date and most probably it had no other motive than the one hinted at above. It would seem that the holy kiss was given at every gathering, but more particularly at Mass. Justin tells us that it was given before the offertory; elsewhere it was before Communion, as is done to-day in the Roman liturgy.

Some other liturgical gestures are less important. To strike the breast in token of sorrow or contrition, to prostrate on the ground, to sprinkle one's head with ashes—these are all actions already mentioned in the Old and the New Testament and they became embodied in the liturgy at an early date. In the gospel we see our Lord breathing upon his disciples, thereby bestowing on them the Holy Ghost, even as the Creator, at the beginning, breathed the breath of life into the body of the first man (Jo. xx, 22). *Insufflation* is still found in the liturgy, but only, it would seem, as an exorcism, as at Baptism and in the blessing of water and oil. This meaning is conveyed by the words that accompany the ceremony. In the last-mentioned blessings, which are of such profound symbolism, we have a number of liturgical archaisms. We have also pointed out (Chap. III) the meaning of the gentle blow which the bishop strikes on the cheek of the candidates at the end of the rite of Confirmation—it may be that it has taken the place of the kiss of peace.

A liturgical gesture, therefore, underlines, as it were, the spoken word and interprets it. A Benedictine of the eighteenth century, Dom de Vert, brought his ingenuity, which was great, and his learning, to bear upon liturgical gestures, so as to trace their origin and to show that their explanation is to be found in the necessities or circumstances of time and place. This would have robbed them, at one blow, of all symbolic meaning. The theory may be of interest and may account for certain ceremonies, but he carried it too far. How could anyone maintain, for instance, that the candles we use in our services originally served no other purpose than to light the gloomy corridors or chapels of the Catacombs?

(4)

Exorcisms—Washing of Feet

These two rites are generally supposed to be connected with Baptism, but they have, as a matter of fact, an independent existence.

The word *exorcism*, like so many other liturgical expressions, is of Greek derivation. Its first meaning is: to adjure, to conjure, and, as both words suggest, it includes the idea of an oath. In christian parlance its exclusive meaning is: to cast out devils.

During his earthly life, our Lord cast out devils; when the possessed were brought to him he exorcized them and restored them to health. These episodes have an important place in the Gospel, and have been carefully studied by commentators (cf. Matt. iv, 24; viii, 16; ix, 33; xii, 22, etc.). He gives power to cast out devils to the twelve, to the seventy-two disciples and to all his followers who exercised it during his lifetime (Mark iii, 15; vi, 13; ix, 37, etc.). After his death we see all christians, without distinction, exercising this power. Tertullian states in several places and very definitely that the Christians fight the devils and that they cast them out of the bodies of the possessed, a fact of which even the pagans were well aware: 'We not only reject those wicked spirits; we overcome them . . . we exorcize them from their victims, as multitudes can testify.'[1] 'At our touch and breathing . . . they leave at our command the bodies they have entered, unwilling and distressed and before your very eyes put to open shame.'[2] Minucius Felix, S. Cyprian, and Origen frequently allude to facts of this kind.

About the middle of the third century these duties were entrusted to a special body of men and, under the title of *exorcists*, these were ranked among the hierarchy. In the letter in which Pope Cornelius enumerates the clergy of Rome, he ranks them with the lower clerics, together with the readers and doorkeepers. They are likewise mentioned in the correspondence of S. Cyprian. About the year 303 an exorcist of the name of Peter was martyred at Rome at the same time as the priest Marcellinus, and one of Rome's most ancient churches is dedicated to them. A number of exorcists are mentioned by name in the epitaphs collected by Oderici and Cardinali, de Rossi, Marucchi, and others.

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[1] *Ad Scapulam*, 2.

[2] *Apolog.*, 23.

The exorcism is usually accompanied by a form of words and a gesture. *Go out of this man*, our Lord said to the devil. The pharisees accused him of using the formula : *in the name of Beelzebub*, as did the magicians. We know the reply of Jesus (Matt. xii, 27 ; Luke xi, 19). It was natural for christians to use the formula : *in the name of the Lord Jesus.* They did so whilst he was still on earth (Mark ix, 37). At Ephesus S. Paul met certain exorcists who cast out devils *in the name of the Lord Jesus* (Acts xix, 17). We shall see presently how much this formula was prized in the early centuries (Chap. XI). Following in this the example of S. Peter, S. Paul, and the Apostles, the early christians had it ever on their lips. S. Justin asserts in several places of his writings that the devils are overcome by the invocation of this name, more effectively than by any other : 'numbers of those who were possessed with devils throughout the whole world, and in your city, many of our people, the christians, by exorcizing them in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, have healed, and do even now heal' (*Apol.*, II, 6, 8 ; *Dial. cum Tryphone*, etc.).

A Greek inscription written on a small plate of gold found near Beyrout is very generally assigned to the second century : it runs as follows :

'I exorcize thee, Satan,
—O cross, cleanse me,—
That thou mayst never depart from thy abode,
In the name of the living Lord God.'

The words *In the name of the living Lord God* designate Christ. The formulas *in the name of the true and living God, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, occur still very frequently in our exorcisms. In Origen we find an adjuration 'in the name of the God of Israel, the God of the Hebrews, who overwhelmed the king of the Egyptians and the Egyptians in the Red Sea, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.'[1] The cross of Christ is also frequently invoked against the devil, as in the above-quoted inscription of Beyrout. An ancient cross bears this inscription :

Emmanuel, God with us.
To me the cross is life,
To thee, my foe, it is death.[2]

Archæologists have collected a considerable number of forms of exorcism, to which we refer the reader. A study of these formulas, such as that of Hadrumetum, presents a strange mixture of christian expressions and magical incantations. In this matter the Church was often called upon to lay down wise regulations so as to repress all superstition.

The book to which allusion is made at the ordination of an exorcist contained the exorcisms used at the casting-out of evil spirits. It exists no longer as a separate volume, but the tenth *titulus* or chapter of our *Roman Ritual* gives the forms of exorcism now in use and it may be that some of them go back to this early period. Such forms are also found in the Missal and the Pontifical, for the dedication of a church, the blessing of the oils, that of salt and water, etc.

Exorcisms are a conspicuous feature of the baptismal rite. They are a survival of the early centuries when, as we have seen, they formed part of the exercises of the catechumenate and were frequently repeated. Then, as now, the catechumen must renounce Satan, his pomps and his works—but in those far-off days this was done in an even more realistic fashion, for the candidate was told to spit towards the west in token of contempt.

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[1] *Contra Cels.* IV, 34; V, 45. [2] Rossi, *Bullet. di arch. christ.*, April 1863.

As we read the New Testament and the writers of the early centuries we cannot fail to note the greater frequency of exorcisms in those days. The reason would seem to be that diabolical molestations were very common in the pagan world. Several writers of the period, for instance Minucius Felix, whose words we have quoted, were convinced that behind every idol a devil was lurking. This point has not been overlooked by archæologists, but all explanations given by them are not equally satisfactory. The struggle between the powers of darkness and the powers of light is a popular topic with writers of the period. We see it as a kind of duel between Christ and Satan: we behold them facing each other in the scene of the temptation in the wilderness. In the last petition of the Lord's prayer—*libera nos a malo*—it is really the devil that is meant, as has been demonstrated by an examination of various readings and the oldest versions, so that the meaning is: *deliver us from the evil spirit*, *the devil*, *the evil one*. Unless we take these facts into account certain passages in the writings of the Fathers must remain incomprehensible. They also account for certain liturgical rites. Before the priest proceeds to bless water, oil, salt, and other objects, he exorcizes them as if they were under the influence of the evil spirit. The bread and wine used at Mass are the only exceptions; I do not think that in any liturgy the blessing and consecration of these elements is ever preceded by an exorcism.

The rivalry between Christ and Satan lends itself to rhetorical developments and has been exploited in every conceivable fashion by ancient writers and during the early centuries of the Middle Ages. Satan is shown to us, caught in his own snare, like a fish that snatches at the bait; he deceived the first man by the fruit of a tree, he is himself entrapped and defeated by the wood of the tree on which Christ was crucified. Let us add that a more sober theology has not identified itself with these theories of the redemption without certain reservations, but whilst it gives us perhaps a less dramatic presentiment of its meaning, it rests on a deeper penetration of the mystery.[1]

(5)

One of the manifestations of hospitality in christian antiquity was the act of washing the feet of guests. The practice itself is of the greatest antiquity and we see many instances of it in the classical writers and in ancient religions: the christian liturgy could not fail to preserve it. According to S. Paul, one of the characteristics of a christian widow is her zeal in the practice of hospitality, one of the exercises of which was the washing of the feet of the saints, viz. the preachers of the gospel (1 Tim. v, 10). S. John describes in detail how Christ washed the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper and how he made this act of his the striking symbol of charity and humility. As a matter of fact it possessed this character already among the Jews, and in Exodus Moses and Aaron were commanded to wash their hands and feet before entering the tabernacle (Exod. xxx, 18–21; xl, 30–32). The custom of placing a fountain or spring of water near the entrance of churches for these ablutions of the hands and feet became universal in the fourth century.

All through the Middle Ages the custom was preserved in monasteries of washing the feet of pilgrims and travellers, or those of the monks on certain occasions. A special hymn, which became very popular, was composed for this occasion. It was called the *hymn of charity*, from the opening words *Ubi charitas et amor, Deus ibi est.* It is sung to this day, on Maundy Thursday, in cathedrals and monasteries in which the ceremony of the washing of feet takes place.

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[1] Cf Rivière, *Le dogme de la Rédemption*, *étude historique*, 1905; *Le dogme de la Rédemption*, *étude theologique*, 1914, p. 90.

In some churches the custom sprang up of washing the feet of the candidates of Baptism. As may be seen in the writings of S. Augustine, in the fourth century the lawfulness of the practice was much discussed and many churches rejected and condemned it. At any rate there is no trace of it at any period previous to the peace of the Church.

(6)

ATTITUDES

Among all peoples the attitude of the body may have a definite signification, just like a gesture; it may translate an emotion or a thought. No one doubts that a man on his knees or lying prostrate is one who humbles himself or pleads for pardon. In the gospel we see the pharisee standing with head erect whilst the publican humbly strikes his breast. If neither of them had uttered a word we should have conjectured their feelings from their respective attitudes. A man who raises his hands to heaven takes God to witness, as it were, or beseeches him, he may even curse him like that distracted mother in the old epitaph deciphered by Paciandi:

Infelixque mater tollit ad astra manus,
Incusatque deos, incusat denique Parcas.[1]

We may say of such attitudes, as of other gestures, that they are a kind of universal language of which the traces are found among all peoples; they are one of the rites of the natural religion which is found in the hearts of all men. The monuments of Egypt and Babylon, of Greece and Rome, furnish us with numerous examples which have been collected and studied by ethnologists.

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[1] 'The unhappy mother raises her hands to heaven, accusing the Gods, and accusing the Fates.' (Cf. *Miscell. archeol.*, Roma, 1891, p. 135 ff.)

In our liturgy these attitudes have, as a rule, a clearly defined meaning. A christian prays standing, kneeling, prostrate; at times he prays with arms stretched out crosswise and facing towards the east. The first of these attitudes, which was the most common one in christian antiquity, as it was among the Jews, betokens respect and attention; christians are seated during the readings and during the singing of the psalms; they stand during the reading of the gospel and during Mass, though for certain prayers they kneel, or even prostrate on the ground. On Sunday they prayed standing, as a sign of gladness; the interval between Easter and Pentecost was a sacred period of fifty days—a prolonged Sunday, so to speak—when there was neither kneeling nor fasting. The kneeling posture was peculiar to days of fasting and penance. Our liturgical books retain traces of these customs which are only noticed by the initiated. If the old custom has been contravened by the enforcement of fast and abstinence on the Ember days in Whit-week, the deacon nevertheless does not call out: *flectamus genua*, for we do not kneel. The fresco of which we spoke in Chapter VIII, page 76, shows the priest standing erect, his hands stretched out as if about to perform the rite of the imposition of hands. Other frescoes in the Catacombs depict women arrayed in long tunics, standing, with their arms raised to heaven. Have we here figures of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Church, or simply figures of *orantes*, that is, women praying in the attitude christians were wont to assume? The question has been learnedly studied by archæologists and likely enough each of the above interpretations is correct in part, for we must not be too exclusive when dealing with a period when symbolism was in such frequent use. But if unlifted hands are the gesture of a suppliant, they also recall the memory of the cross on which Christ extended his arms.

Tertullian, who overlooks nothing, and who, more than any other author, gives us a picture of real life, thus describes the christian's attitude when at prayer: 'We not only raise, but even expand (our hands), and taking our model from the Lord's Passion, even in prayer we confess to Christ' (*De orat.*, XIV). 'We more commend our prayers to God when we pray with modesty and humility, with not even our hands too loftily elevated, but elevated temperately and becomingly' (*ibid.* XVII). 'We lift our eyes, with hands outstretched, because free from sin; with head uncovered, for we have nothing whereof to be ashamed . . .' (Apol. XXX).

We should find it hard to realize the importance which, in those days, was attached to these various attitudes did we not know that even councils were obliged to remind the faithful of these rules. Would anyone believe that there existed certain heretics who were dubbed *agonyclites* because they refused to kneel? Archæologists of the seventeenth and eighteenth century indulged in prolonged controversies on these matters.

S. Ireneus gives another symbolic interpretation of these attitudes: 'We kneel on six days of the week in acknowledgement of our having fallen into sin; but on Sunday we stand erect as if to show that Christ has raised us up and that his grace has delivered us from sin and death' (P. L., VII, col. 1234).

The custom of kneeling or prostrating, like many other attitudes at prayer, goes back to the age of the Apostles. Thus S. Stephen falls on his knees for his last prayer; SS. Peter and Paul pray on their knees; the brethren who escort Paul to the boat that was to take him to Jerusalem kneel in prayer on the shore (Acts vii, 60; ix, 40; xx, 36; xxi, 5, etc.). In fact the practice is older than christianity and we find it among the Jews and among most pagan peoples, so spontaneous an act is it.

In the assemblies of the faithful, order and uniformity was maintained by the deacons, who used to call out: 'Arise, kneel down, bow the head'; the *Flectamus genua, levate; humiliate capita vestra Deo* of our missals are reminiscences of those early days. Such rubrics are far more numerous in the Oriental liturgies than that of the West.

The custom of facing towards the east when at prayer was very dear to the early christians, who understood its symbolic meaning better than we do. The sun rises in the east; Christ, the *sun of justice*, rose at dawn; and when he comes to judge the living and the dead, he will come from the east. So they thought in those days. For the same reason churches were for a long time so constructed that as the congregation looked towards the altar it faced east; hence the word *orientation*. On the other hand the catechumens faced towards the west when renouncing Satan.

The question has been asked whether in primitive times a congregation ever sat down in church. It seems certain that they were seated during the long readings and the homilies. But in this respect customs varied, and from certain allusions in ancient sermons we gather that the people stood whilst listening to the exhortation of the bishop who was seated in a chair whose shape recalled that of the consuls (cf. Chap. VI). Was he not a magistrate, a judge and teacher in his church?

This would be the place to speak of processions, and even of sacred dances, if we had any proofs of their existence prior to the peace of the Church. Demonstrations of this kind, which took enormous proportions from the fourth century onwards, could hardly have taken place at a period when the christians, if not actually persecuted, were always suspect. As we have seen, they were able to carry their dead to the grave without raising any objection on the part of the police. Some authors have seen an indication of processions in the *stations* of which we read already in the third century. However, the word implies no more than that the faithful came together on certain fixed days and at an hour and place determined beforehand. They went to the place of assembly in groups, especially if the occasion happened to be the anniversary of a martyr celebrated at his tomb. However, this does not really answer to the definition of a procession properly so called, such as the processions in use in the fourth and fifth century at Jerusalem, at Rome, and elsewhere.

CHAPTER IX

ELEMENTS

LIKE the Greek and other Oriental liturgies, the Roman liturgy of to-day makes a constant use of material substances or elements. Water, oil, salt, fire, candles, palms, incense, ashes, are blessed, sometimes with much solemnity, as at the ceremonies of February 2, Ash-Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Holy Saturday, and on a few other occasions.

It would almost seem as if the liturgy had annexed nature; she takes up the various elements and transforms and sanctifies them for the use of the faithful. This greatly shocks certain intellectuals who condemn such practices, on the plea that they offer to God a pure worship. As for those heretics who take up a similar attitude, they are wanting in logic, since most of them retain Baptism and the Eucharist in which water, bread, and wine play the rôle we know. It seems to us that if their psychology were sounder both these classes of people would admire the masterly way in which the Church uses these material objects in order to convey spiritual truths.

We are not here justifying these practices, because our book is not an apology but an historical survey. All we have to do is to ascertain what was the attitude of the Church during the period under examination. Ethnographers furnish us with overwhelming evidence to the effect that most religions made use of material objects, and an examination will show that this practice, in the religion of Greece and Rome in particular, prevented the Church for a time from using them as freely as she does to-day.

However, the Church was not ignorant of the fact that the Mosaic law, from which she borrowed so many customs, set her an example in this respect and that Christ not only never condemned ritual but consecrated it by his own action. Thus for the greatest of the sacraments he chose bread and wine ; at the hands of John he received the baptism of water and decreed that water should be the element of christian regeneration ; he commanded his disciples to anoint the sick with oil that they might be healed ; with a mixture of earth and saliva he himself opened the eyes of a blind man ; in his phraseology a lighted lamp is the sign of watchfulness, whilst salt and the leaven which causes the paste to rise are similarly symbols of spiritual things ; on Simon he bestows the name of Cephas, rock, and the two sons of Zebedee are called ‘ sons of thunder.’ This symbolism is particularly noticeable in the Gospel of S. John : Christ is the water which springs up into life everlasting ; he is the light of the world, the bread of life, the vine of which we are the branches, the way that leads to the Father ; he gives his body as food under the form of bread, his blood for our refreshment under the form of wine.

Hence we see the primitive liturgy making the widest use of these elements. The principle of this symbolism having been laid down, it proved a germ which, during the whole of the Middle Ages, bore most plentiful fruit, in fact we see it displaying, in not a few rituals, a luxuriance which was at times excessive.

These principles were laid down in the period preceding the council of Nicea. In two treatises, viz. ‘ *The resurrection of the flesh* ’ and ‘ *The Flesh of Christ*,’ Tertullian defends the flesh, or the body, against the *Docetes* and other heretics who disparaged it beyond measure. He reminds them that the body they revile so bitterly is the abode of the soul, that the body cooperates with the soul and that we reach the soul through the body. He goes to the very bottom of the question, as is his wont, when he says in his forcible language: 'It is indeed the flesh that is washed (in Baptism) but it is the soul that is cleansed; the flesh is anointed, but the soul is sanctified; the flesh is marked (with the cross) but the soul is made strong; the hands overshadow the flesh (in the imposition of hands) but the soul is illumined by the spirit; the body feasts upon the flesh and blood of Christ, but the soul feeds upon God (*Deo saginatur*); hence what is joined in toil may not be parted in the reward.'[1]

After the water of Baptism which washes away all sins, after the bread and wine which become the body and blood of Christ, oil holds the most important place in our ritual; its virtues have been thus happily summed up: '*oleum sanat, lenit, recreat, penetrat ac lucet:* oil heals, soothes, strengthens, penetrates, lightens.'[2]

Oil prepares the catechumen for Baptism; the sacred chrism consecrates the neophyte and confirms the christian, and in Extreme Unction oil acts as a remedy; it purifies and sanctifies the hands of the priest and the forehead of the bishop; kings are also consecrated with it. The *Apostolic Tradition* and the *Canons* of S. Hippolytus and other ecclesiastical constitutions of the third century have a blessing of the holy oil. Tertullian and S. Cyprian speak of it. The former says: 'When we have issued from the font we are thoroughly anointed with a blessed unction . . . the unction runs (down our flesh) carnally, but profits spiritually. . . .'[3] Certain texts of the New Testament could be taken as alluding to an unction with oil (2 Cor. i, 21, 22; 1 John ii, 20), but the *locus classicus* is the text of S. James (v. 14, 15). At this early period the blessing of the oil was a very simple rite, but in course of time it developed along the most magnificent lines, in fact it became one of the most sumptuous rites of our liturgy. The function of Maundy Thursday fully answers to this description. It includes the blessing of the oil of the sick, the oil of the catechumens, and the oil mixed with balsam which under the name of chrism is the matter of the sacrament of Confirmation. No doubt the rite, as we know it, is of later date, but it contains ancient elements which make of it one of the most striking ceremonies of the Roman Pontifical.

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[1] *De resur. carnis*, VIII.

[2] Dens, *Theol. dogm.*, 1832, t. VII, p. 3.

[3] *De Bap.*, VII.

Salt was one of the elements of certain sacrifices of the Old Law (Lev. ii, 13; Num. xviii, 19); but it is more rarely used in our liturgy. The Roman Church uses it in Baptism and in the blessing of Holy Water. The latter ceremony belongs to a later period. The salt is blessed, together with the water with which it is to be mixed, before the Sunday Mass. As is usual in all blessings of material elements, the salt is exorcised before it is blessed. The exorcism of the salt used at Baptism differs slightly. The salt placed in the mouth of the catechumen is the 'salt of wisdom.' This use of salt in Baptism is perhaps of much earlier date. Mgr. Duchesne sees in it a distinctive feature of the Roman rite (*Origines du Culte*, 4th ed.). It was, however, used in Africa, where the salt was given to the catechumen not once only, as at Rome, but throughout the whole year (of his catechumenate). S. Augustine speaks of it as an ancient observance; for him the *sacrament of the salt* is, like the other sacraments, a sensible and material sign, for when the salt is blessed it becomes the symbol of wisdom. Elsewhere among some christians whose orthodoxy was not altogether above suspicion, salt was given with the Eucharistic bread.[1]

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[1] On this point cf. Batiffol, *L'Eucharistie*, 5th ed., Paris, 1913, pp. 192 and 441. In the rite of Matal, of which we shall speak later on, the victim is made to eat consecrated salt before it is slain. Cf. Tixeront, *Mélanges de patrol. et d'hist. des dogmes*, Paris, 1921, p. 265.

After giving to the catechumens the *salt of wisdom* the Church offered to the newly-baptized a draught of milk and honey. This custom, which in the Roman Church lasted at least up to the pontificate of S. Gregory the Great, is vouched for in the sixth, the fifth, and even in the third century since both Tertullian and the Canons of Hippolytus allude to it. We also find traces of it in the church of Alexandria whose liturgy sometimes bears a curious resemblance to that of Rome. It has been suggested that the rite is of pagan origin, being based on the legend of Dionysos, but the hypothesis seems quite gratuitous, because the expression 'land flowing with milk and honey,' as a description of plenty, recurs again and again in the Old Testament, and there can be no doubt that there we have the origin of the custom. As a matter of fact a very old collect of the Leonine Sacramentary can only be understood by bearing this in mind.[1]

In the fourth century, at Jerusalem, there is a solemn blessing of the fire every evening, at the hour of the *lucernarium*, that is, the hour when the lamps are lit—'at the hour of lighting up' in fact. The poet Prudentius and other writers of the fourth century bear witness to similar customs in their respective provinces. However, already in the third century certain ecclesiastical constitutions, particularly that of Hippolytus, show that this evening hour was deemed most sacred, and the lighting of the lamps for the last prayers of the day was marked by a religious ceremony. The evening marks the hour of repose for the worker who has toiled all through the day; it is also the hour of recollection and prayer for the christian who awaits the second coming of Christ in the middle of the night. There exists a famous hymn, erroneously attributed to Athenagoras, in the second century, entitled "Hymn of the gladsome light, or Hymn of the *lucernarium*":

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[1] Cf. Duchesne, *Origines du Culte chrétien*, p. 343; Muratori, t. I, p. 318.

Gladsome light of the holy glory,
Of the immortal, heavenly Father
Holy and blessed (Son),
O Jesus Christ!
Behold us at the hour of the setting sun,
At the hour when the evening lamp is lit.
We praise the Father, the Son
And the Holy Spirit of God.
Thou art worthy at all times of praise
By voices without sin,
O Son of God who bestowest life!
Wherefore the world gives glory to thee.

In the ceremony of the blessing of the new fire and the paschal candle on Holy Saturday, which, in reality, ought to be performed at the hour of lighting-up, we are still reminded of the ancient custom, and the nearness of the hour of Christ's Resurrection invests it with added solemnity.

A text already quoted of the council of Elvira, at the beginning of the fourth century, shows that the use of candles in certain circumstances was condemned as superstitious. Tertullian and Lactantius scoff at the pagans who were wont to burn many tapers at their ceremonies. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the christians had no scruple in using torches at their funeral ceremonies. As a matter of fact there happened in the case of candles what happened in regard to incense: they were forbidden at a time when their use might have recalled pagan ideas, but were admitted at a subsequent period, when all danger of superstition had vanished. Their use in the fourth and especially in the fifth century is proved by a vast number of texts, inscriptions, and archæological monuments.

The use of incense, which is so common in our ceremonies, is of more recent date. Apart from funeral ceremonies in which it may have been employed, it is difficult to find any solid proof of its use before the middle of the fourth century; in fact it seems to have been condemned by several writers of an earlier period, such as Justin, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and others. This need not surprise us, because if incense were justified by the practice of the Jews and, if need be, by the liturgy of the Apocalypse, its frequent use in pagan worship must needs have rendered it suspect in the eyes of the christians of that period. At a later date, after the peace of Constantine, when circumstances were altered, less severity seemed called for and the smoke of incense everywhere perfumed our churches.

Ashes so solemnly blessed to-day at the beginning of Lent, were formerly reserved for penitents, as we learn from Tertullian. He describes these men lying prostrate on the ground, asking for forgiveness, sprinkled with ashes and clothed in sackcloth or in a hair-shirt. To do penance in ashes and sackcloth—*in cinere et cilicio*—is an expression of the gospel recalling a Jewish custom. As a matter of fact ethnographers find among most people a similar use of ashes as an expression of sorrow, grief, penance, and remorse. But it does not seem to us of much use to follow them in their enquiry as to the idea that underlies this symbolic act. To our thinking the Church sufficiently explains its meaning in the prayers that accompany the ceremony. The blessing of palms, on Palm Sunday, is later than the fourth century, but the prayers and chants which accompany it in our present ritual supply us with important and enlightening information on many of the topics discussed in this chapter.

Another element of capital importance in most ancient religions, even in that of Moses, but wholly banished from christian worship, is blood. On every altar victims are slain—oxen, calves, sheep, lambs, turtle-doves, at times, as to-day among certain savage tribes, even human victims. A custom so universal, so strange, and so cruel, could not fail to rouse the curiosity of historians and philosophers. It is one of the most popular subjects of the history of religion and the number of recent works on the *idea of sacrifice* in ancient religions is considerable.

We need do no more than note the fact and to point out how novel and exceptional was the attitude of christianity in this respect. In the cult of Mithra which, more especially in the second and third century, proved a most obstinate rival of christianity, there was a ceremony of initiation in which the aspirant was baptized in a bath of blood, viz. the blood of an ox, immolated to Mithra. Numberless monuments of antiquity bear the effigy of this divinity. The fourth-century poet Prudentius describes the savage and revolting ceremony of the *taurobolium*, without sparing us any of its details. He depicts the aspirant to the baptism of Mithra, stripped to the waist, enclosed in a pit beneath the wooden floor on which the ox has been slain. Through holes bored in the floor the blood trickles down on him; he holds up his forehead and with widely opened mouth and nostrils he inhales the hot blood of the victim; then, dripping with bovine gore, he comes out of his hole hailed by the initiated a ‘a new being.’[1]

This is only one instance, out of a thousand, of a bloody sacrifice. Among all ancient religions christianity holds practically a unique position; it abolishes all bloody sacrifices; it has no need of such victims since the day when, for the sake of all men, Christ, the Lamb of God, was slain once for all time, washing away in his blood the sins of the world, whose sacrifice, offered once on Calvary, is daily renewed in the bloodless rites of the Mass.[2]

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[1] *Peristephanon* X, v. 1011–1050.

[2] I know that a few instances have been quoted of bloody sacrifices among christians, but they are of so exceptional a character that they do not contradict the general rule. They have been well studied by F. C. Conybeare in his excellent *Rituale Armenorum*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1905, pp. 54–85. The Abbé Tixeront has also studied the question, especially in the Armenian rite of the *Matal*, which consisted in offering an animal, a lamb for choice. *Mélanges de patristique et d'histoire des dogmes*, Paris, 1921, pp. 261–278.

CHAPTER X

FORMS OF PRAYER

FROM the very outset one of the distinguishing features of liturgical prayer is the element of spontaneity or improvisation in its utterance. Thus S. Paul speaks of a gathering in which the prophets and others endowed with various charismata speak each in turn. He feels compelled to lay down certain rules so as to cut short possible abuses. Women are not allowed to speak in church: 'Let all things be done decently and according to order' (1 Cor. xi–xiv *passim*). The freedom of those first days, which was already degenerating into licence, had to be curtailed at an early date. Women were forbidden to speak, and the same prohibition was soon laid on all who abused the privilege. Eventually only the president—for the most part the bishop—spoke in the name of all. At the *agapes*, and certain unofficial gatherings, leave was granted to anyone to speak, to exhort, to sing, or to improvise a prayer. Of all these primitive customs the most long-lived was that which authorized the presiding priest, who prayed in the name of all, to improvise prayer according as the Spirit moved him. This we learn from Justin, Tertullian, and most of the writers of the period. Even the most solemn formulas were extemporized. The Acts of the Apostles speak of a prayer said at an ordination but do not give the text; the *Apostolic Tradition* contains a prayer of this kind but seems to suggest that the form may vary; the same is true of the Eucharistic prayer, for the formulas of the

Didache, of Clement of Rome and Hippolytus and those of the Apostolic Constitutions are not identical. A similar variety obtains in the liturgical prayers composed after the fourth century, even as regards the Eucharistic anaphora. However, this freedom of improvisation was not anarchy. Prayer was subject to certain rules; in some instances the theme was necessarily the same and uniform formulas were necessarily used, as for instance the name of the three divine Persons in the administration of Baptism and the words of institution in the celebration of the Eucharist. All liturgies bear out this fact, for notwithstanding their variety all have preserved these traditional formulas. In fact, though diverse in inspiration, these prayers fall naturally into certain groups. Thus as regards the Roman liturgy, which is of such venerable antiquity, it would seem that the bulk of the prayers in use to-day are an inheritance of the early centuries. In a famous text of which liturgists have made the utmost, and in which already Origen, S. Augustine, and other writers of that period thought they could see every category of Catholic prayer, S. Paul writes: 'I desire, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men: for kings, and for all that are in high stations; that we may lead a quiet and a peaceable life in all piety and chastity.'[1] These *δεήσεις, προσευχάς, ἐντεύξεις, εὐχαρίστιας*, are, so we are told, our litanies, collects, anaphoras, and other similar prayers.[2] I do not think that so rigorous a classification could have existed at a time when spontaneity and improvisation were the distinguishing features of prayer. In other epistles of S. Paul the words prayers, supplications, thanksgiving, are used in a very broad sense.[3]

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[1] 1 Tim. ii, 1–3; cf. iv, 4, 5.

[2] Probst, Liturg. des IV Jahrh., pp. 279 and 333.

[3] Cf. Philip. iv, 6; 2 Thess. 1, 2, etc.

(1)

These distinctions arose gradually and we may draw up a catalogue of them. First of all we have *ACCLAMATIONS.* These are very ancient and popular, consisting, often enough, of one word, or a short sentence. To-day we should call them *ejaculations*, or *ejaculatory prayers*. But these aspirations are full of deep significance and are in themselves a most fervent prayer. The words *Amen*, *Alleluia*, *Deo Gratias*, which for most of us are formulas devoid of meaning, like coins which, having been current too long, have lost their impression—retain all their freshness in the primitive liturgy. *Amen*, *So be it!* when uttered by the christian who has just received Communion, is an act of faith in the sacrament; at the conclusion of a prayer it is his agreement with what has been uttered by the bishop; *Alleluia*, *give praise to God*, is a song of joy and triumph; *Maranatha*, which fell into disuse at an early date, is a longing for the second advent of the Lord—*may the Lord come speedily!* In the words *Dominus vobiscum—the Lord be with you*—the bishop salutes the faithful before prayer; their reply: *et cum spiritu tuo* is another proof of the part they should take in the liturgy, always in union with the priest. *Pax vobis—peace unto you*—is used for a like reason. The words *in nomine Domini—in the name of the Lord Jesus*—are an acclamation of deep significance, as we shall explain elsewhere (Chap. XI). *Deo Gratias*, identical with *Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro*, is a summary of every prayer of thanksgiving, and expresses submission to God's will, just like the words *fiat voluntas tua.* When S. Cyprian was condemned to be beheaded he received the sentence with the words: *Deo gratias.* The meaning of the phrase is so essentially christian that the heretics of the fourth century substituted for it another and, as a matter of fact, quite harmless formula—*Deo laudes*, *praise to God*—which became their battle cry.

These acclamations were for the faithful like the word of command, one would almost say, a pass-word, and in those days they still retained all their original colour and mystery. There is not one of these formulas to which one could not apply what Cardinal Pitra said of the *Alleluia*: 'its history is one long poem.' Often enough these acclamations lead to a dialogue; to the *Dominus vobiscum* and the *Pax vobis* of the priest or bishop corresponds the supplication of the people: *Et cum spiritu tuo*, and to the *Sursum corda* the answer is *Habemus ad Dominum.*

(2)

The Anaphora or Canon, the Eucharistic Prayer

The prayer of consecration of the Eucharist, originally called the prayer of the *anaphora* (ἀναφερεῖν—to offer), or the Eucharistic prayer properly so called (εὐχαριστεῖν, to give thanks), differs greatly from the *acclamations.* Here we no longer have a simple cry of the heart, such as *Amen* or *Alleluia*, but a discursive or detailed prayer. Its equivalent in our present liturgy is to be found in the various prefaces of the Mass and the prayers of the Canon. The *Exultet* of Holy Saturday, the prefaces of the blessing of the font, the holy oils, ordinations, the blessing of palms, and those generally used at all functions of special importance, belong to this class and are cast in the same mould. The special features of the preface are, at the beginning, the well-known dialogue of which we find traces as early as the third century:

Dominus vobiscum. Et cum spiritu tuo.
Sursum corda. Habemus ad Dominum.
Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro. Dignum et justum est.

The last clause of the dialogue is taken up again: *Vere dignum et justum est*, so as to connect it with the body of the preface which varies according as the occasion is the Eucharistic consecration, the blessing of the font, that of the holy oils, or some other function. In the Roman and other liturgies the preface to-day leads up to the *Sanctus* by means of a concluding formula which hardly ever varies : *et ideo cum angelis et archangelis*, etc. However, this arrangement is not primitive. The true *finale* of the anaphora is a doxology, as may be seen in the anaphora of Hippolytus and other examples of the ante-Nicene period.

Scholars have looked for the origin of the anaphora among the Jews, who have, indeed, prayers of this kind. They even sought it in classical antiquity. However, it goes without saying that in adopting this formula, the Church adapted it to her mysteries. Some of the prayers quoted by us, such as those of Clement of Rome, the *Didache* and of S. Polycarp, are probably anaphoric or Eucharistic prayers. It was, however, reserved to S. Hippolytus, at the beginning of the third century, to give us the most accomplished model—for that age—of this type of prayer. We quoted it in the chapter on the Eucharist not only because it is one of the most important monuments of the pre-Nicene liturgy, but also because it sensibly influenced most liturgies—even the Roman canon—which treat the same theme.

The anaphora of the *Apostolic Constitutions* is much more prolix. Some liturgists have thought, though without sufficient grounds, that this was the oldest and most universal form of the Eucharistic consecration. Nevertheless, it deserves careful study because, though its final revision dates from the fourth century, its tenor conforms to that of the earliest Eucharistic prayers.

(3)

The Collect or Prayer

In its structure the *collect* resembles that of the preface without, however, its magnificence, and, for the most part, without its length.

The anaphora should be looked upon as a more solemn prayer, only used at the great blessings, of which the most important is the Eucharistic consecration. The *collect*, like the *anaphora*, is reserved to the bishop or the president of the assembly who speaks in order to sum up the prayers of the community. It is similarly preceded by *Dominus vobiscum*, but not by the other acclamations nor by the introductory clauses *Vere dignum*, etc. There is as yet no agreement on the meaning of the title *collect*. Is it derived from *colligere*, to gather together, because in it the priest gathered or summed up the sentiments of the assembly, or because it was recited at the moment when the faithful had come together for the synaxis? It is for the latter reason that the first prayer of the Mass is to-day called collect. But we have a prayer of the same kind at the end of Vespers and each of the Hours of the day and night Office, and as a general rule the psalmody or any part of the office ends with a collect. At times a collect followed after each psalm, as was the custom of the monks of Egypt, or after each lesson, as on Holy Saturday, or after most services and blessings.

The form of the collect varies. In ancient times it was the fruit of improvisation, as was the anaphora. Between the second and the seventh century the Roman genius produced a set of collects, short, of uniform design, remarkable for their simplicity at the same time as for the elegance of their form, the definiteness of the mould into which they are cast and the depth of thought. They are one of the treasures of the Breviary, the Missal, and other Roman books.

During the same period the Gallo-Franks, and especially the Spaniards, were led by their barbaric genius, always fond of subtlety and prolixity, to give to their collects, as to their prefaces, developments often characterized by bad taste and preciosity. There are Mozarabic *illations* (prefaces) which are simply panegyrics of some Saint and in which may be seen all the defects of a bad sermon. By the side of these flaws we discover much religious fervour and enthusiasm, beauties, in fact, of the first order. A few of these prefaces or collects, such as that used at the blessing of the palms, have even found a place in the Roman liturgy.

But to confine ourselves to the period we are studying, we may cull a few samples in Origen and other ante-Nicene documents: Origen prays thus: '*O God almighty, grant us to have part with the prophets, with the apostles of thy Christ, so that we may likewise have part with Christ.*

In a papyrus of Oxyrhynchus which possibly dates from the close of the third century, we read: '*Almighty God, who didst create the heavens, the earth and the sea and all that they contain, help me, have pity on me, cleanse me from my sins, save me in this world and in the next through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, through whom is glory and power world without end. Amen.*[1]

(4)

The Litany

The word *λιτανία* or *λετανία* signifies *supplication.* In the liturgy the name has been given to a form of prayer in which the priest or deacon calls out an invocation to which the people answer by an acclamation. This acclamation is generally the *Kyrie eleison—Lord have mercy.* It seems rather strange that the *Kyrie eleison* should not occur in the liturgy previous to the fourth century. Probst, who made a searching enquiry into the question, failed to trace it either in the apostolic Fathers or in the ecclesiastical writers of the second and third century. On the other hand a *Kyrie eleison* has been discovered in the pagan author Arrian, a discovery that caused a good deal of stir, and there may be an instance also in Virgil: *Faune*, *precor*, *miserere mei* (Aen., XII, 77). However, there was no need for christians to go so far afield: they can find countless examples in the psalms and even in the New Testament. The first liturgical use of the invocation comes in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (fourth century); from that time onwards it became one of the most popular acclamations and in the fifth and sixth century the great processions called *Litany* or *Rogations* deploy amid the repeated chant of *Kyrie eleison—Lord have mercy;* it also found a place in the Mass and divers ceremonies. Its various phases, from the fourth century onwards, have been carefully noted by Edmund Bishop. However, this question does not belong to our province. Beside the *Kyrie eleison* we usually find the *Christe eleison*, with other Latin invocations, *miserere nobis*, *ora pro nobis*, *propitius esto*, *libera nos*, *Domine*, *te rogamus*, *audi nos.* All these supplications: *have mercy on us*, *pray for us*, *be propitious to us*, *hear us*, *deliver us*, are gathered together in the celebrated litany of Holy Saturday, called litany of the saints, in that of the Rogations, and other prayers of this kind which in the Middle Ages enjoyed enormous popularity, for we find hundreds of such liturgical pieces.

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[1] Grenfell and Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Part III, no. 407, p. 12. London, 1903.

The litany of Holy Saturday—one of the oldest and most beautiful—is composite in its structure and we can distinguish in it certain earlier elements. Whilst the first part is derived from what in the ancient liturgy was called the *deacon's prayer*, because it was recited by the deacon at the end of the Mass of the catechumens, the concluding part, which contains prayers for the Church, for the Pope, for kings and princes, for the fruits of the earth, for the departed, corresponds to *the prayer of the faithful* which used to be recited by the bishop after the withdrawal of the catechumens, the penitents and all those who did not communicate.

This *prayer of the faithful*, a form of liturgical prayer which still holds a great place in the liturgies of the East, has almost wholly disappeared from the liturgy of Rome. However, there remains a valuable trace of it in the wonderful prayers of Good Friday. First there is the priest's or bishop's call to prayer: '*Let us pray, dearly beloved brethren, for the holy Church of God, that our God and Lord may vouchsafe to give her peace and unity and protect her throughout the world. . . .*'

After this the deacon calls out: *Flectamus genua*—let us bend our knees: the subdeacon answers: *Levate*—arise. Lastly there follows the prayer of the bishop: '*Almighty and eternal God, who hast revealed thy glory to all nations in Christ, watch over the works of thy mercy: that thy Church, spread over the whole world, may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of thy name. Through the same our Lord.* Amen.'

Prayer is then offered, after the same fashion, for the Pope, for bishops, for the whole clergy, for widows, for the rulers of the earth, for heretics, for pagans and for the Jews. In these supplications we hear an echo, hardly weakened by time, of the prayer spoken of by Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Justin, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, by which the martyrs prepared themselves for death, like that Palestinian martyr who prayed first for all christians, for the Jews, for the Samaritans, for the pagans, for the emperors, and lastly for the judge who had condemned him and for the executioner who was about to strike him. Scholars have carefully searched the writings of the Fathers and the ecclesiastical writers of the first centuries for traces of prayers in the form of a litany, the Catholic prayer *par excellence.* In the fifth century, and during the Pelagian controversies, doctors like S. Augustine and S. Prosper of Aquitaine, or Pope Innocent I, found arguments against the heretics in that prayer which was recited in all the churches, for, says Pope Innocent I, *lex orandi, lex credendi*—the rule of prayer is also the rule of faith. The litanic form is not less ancient than the anaphora; certain writers have suggested that it may owe something to certain Jewish and even pagan prayers (Apuleius, *Metam.*, IX, 17). Lactantius gives us the text of a prayer—and it is a real litany—which Licinius ordered his pagan soldiers to repeat:

Supreme God, we beseech thee,
Holy God, we pray thee.
We commend all just causes to thee.
We commend our safety to thee.
We commend our empire to thee, etc.[1]

(5)

The Doxology

Etymologically, the doxology (δοξολογία—glorification) is the praise or glorification of God. More will be said of it when we come to treat of prayer to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, for in Catholic liturgy the doxology is exclusively addressed to the Trinity or one of the three divine Persons. We will only remark here that if in our present liturgy the doxology hardly occurs except as the *finale* of a prayer, psalm, preface, etc., in early times, though it filled a similar rôle, the doxology was often an independent prayer which could easily be classified under such acclamations as the *Te decet laus* which we shall quote presently, and the *Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

(6)

Creeds (Symbols of Faith)

The various forms of the creed must be given a place among liturgical prayers. Even Oesterley acknowledges the difficulty of finding in the Jewish liturgy a parallel to this kind of prayer. The fact is that the *creed* is characteristic of a Church which does not profess a religion of pure sentiment, as has been imagined, taught and practised by certain sects. Faith is the true basis of the christian life. Christianity is a religion of authority and its prayer is grounded on dogma. Hence the charter of the Church's faith, which we call the creed, is one of the elements of her liturgy; it is, in fact, a prayer.

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[1] *De mort. persec*, 46. P. L. VII, 264.

During the ante-Nicene period we find several forms of profession of faith almost identical with the Roman one, which is probably the oldest and the most universal. Its name—the *Apostles' Creed*—shows that the Church ascribes it to the apostolic era; and not without cause, for we find in the earliest writers, such as S. Irenæus, and even in S. Paul, what is called a *rule of faith*, that is, a summary of the essential truths of our religion. The formulation of the *rule of faith* was a gradual process. According to serious writers, the form of the Creed which now follows may date as far back as the middle of the second century:

'*I believe in God, the Father Almighty, and in Jesus*
Christ his Son, our Lord, born of the Virgin,
crucified under Pontius Pilate,
risen from the dead on the third day,
ascended into heaven,
seated at the right hand of the Father,
from whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead,
and I believe in the Holy Ghost.'

And in a more complete form:

'*I believe in God the Father Almighty;*
and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, wa crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried;
on the third day he rose from the dead,
ascended into heaven,
is seated at the right hand of the Father:
from whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead;
and in the Holy Ghost,

in holy Church,
in the forgiveness of sins,
in the resurrection of the body.'[1]

In our own days scholars have studied, collected, and classified these various formulas with their variants. Careful editions give us an accurate text. Here, then, we are on very solid ground. Each of the articles of the creed should be diligently studied because it expresses the faith of the Church at that period, and there is not one of them that is not full of deep significance or that has not been the object of prolonged controversy.

The only creed known at the period included in our survey is that of the Apostles, but each church teaches its own version of it to its catechumens, explaining it article by article. They have to recite it at their Baptism and promise to hold none other.

The council of Nicea, 325, issued another and fuller creed, although, as a matter of fact, it was only the Apostles' Creed as it was recited in the Church of Cæsarea, except for a few additions with a view to countering the errors of Arius. It was finally completed at the close of the fourth century by the addition of a few clauses in regard to the Holy Ghost, and under the name of 'Creed of Nicea–Constantinople' it ended by securing a place, at least on some days, in the liturgy of the Mass.[2] It did not, however, supplant the Apostles' Creed, which has kept its place to this day in the rite of Baptism. As for the *Athanasian Creed*, it is of a later date.

We have noted elsewhere that the formula of the creed is deemed of such importance that the ancient Eucharistic anaphora is constructed on a similar plan and inspired by the same ideas.

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[1] This is Rufinus' form, and identical with that of Marcellus of Ancyra and, substantially, with the rule of faith of Novatian. Cf. A. E. Burn, *An Introduction to the Creeds*, p. 46.

[2] On the text of this creed and its insertion in the Mass, cf. Dom Capelle, *Origine antiadoptianiste de notre symbole*, *Recherches de Théol. médiév.*, Louvain, 1929.

(7)

The Singing of Psalms and Hymns

When she took over the psalms from the Jews the Church, no doubt, also borrowed from them the custom of singing them—and to the same tunes. Some psalms, such as the 135th, have a refrain and are thus suited to one or other of the forms respectively called *antiphonal* or *responsorial.* The *antiphonal* form consists in the chant of a psalm by two clerics, each choir singing an alternate verse; or in repeating a verse, or part of a verse, by way of refrain. In a *responsory,* or in the *responsorial* chant, the psalm is sung by one cantor only, the choir or the congregation repeating one verse as a refrain. As a matter of fact these two terms have not always been used with absolute precision and there is a certain amount of obscurity as regards the origin of these chants.

A third way consisted in singing a psalm straight through, without any kind of refrain—*uno tractu.* Hence the word *tract* by which this kind of chant is designated. These different ways of singing the psalms are still in use at Mass and at other offices. The introit, the offertory, the Communion, are antiphonal chants; the psalms of Vespers and other Hours are sung by two choirs alternately, so that that office also is antiphonal; the *gradual* is a *responsory ;* in Lent and on some other occasions the *Alleluia,* which is a song of joy, is replaced by a psalm sung straight through and for that reason called *tract,* and the lessons of the office are interspersed with responsories or tracts. It must be confessed that the experts are very far from being of one mind as regards the origin of ecclesiastical music, commonly called *Gregorian chant.* There are no documents of the period here under review, so that we need not discuss the question.

What is certain is that in the early Church there was singing of psalms, hymns, and canticles, whatever may have been the melodies to which they were sung. Most of the prayers we have examined—acclamations, anaphoras, collects—are cast in a lyrical mould and would easily lend themselves to a simple chant such as that of the psalms.

Manifestations of joy, fervour, and religious enthusiasm occur frequently at this period. The gospel of S. Luke contains three canticles; in S. Paul certain passages seem to have about them a musical rhythm; he himself writes to the Colossians: 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you . . . teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing in grace in your hearts to God' (Col. iii, 16). At an early time, and apart from the canonical books, we come across poetical pieces called odes, canticles and hymns which are also prayers and so deserve to be noticed in this chapter.

A curious collection of poetical pieces, dating in all probability from about the end of the first century, was one of the lucky finds of recent years. They have been called *The Odes of Solomon.* Here and there we observe traces of Jacobite vocalization, so that it is clear that they used to be sung, a fact which, even if the notation, which is of the fifth century, were lacking, would be sufficiently indicated by the lyrical inspiration which makes of this work one of the most remarkable compositions of primitive christian literature. For this reason we give a few passages, all the more as the work is not yet very widely known.

'I give thee thanks, O Lord, in that I love thee. O Most High, do not forsake me, for thou art my hope. Gratuitously have I received thy grace—it will be my life. . . .' (IV, p. 8 ff.).

'For in the Lord is my hope; I have no fear; and because the Lord is my salvation, I fear not; and he is as a crown on my head; I shall not tremble.

‘Even though the whole world be shaken, I shall stand, and if all visible things perish, I shall not die, because the Lord is with me and I with him. Alleluia.

‘. . . Open, open your hearts to the joy of the Lord and let your love overflow into your mouth so that you may yield to the Lord the fruits of a holy life and speak cautiously in his light . . . (VIII).

‘As the sun is the joy of them that seek its light, so is the Lord my joy, for he is my sun ; his rays have raised me up and his light has scattered all darkness before my face (XV, p. 16).

‘Even as the husbandman’s task is to guide the plough and that of the pilot to steer his ship, so is it my task to sing the praises of the Lord ; my work and my toil is in his praises, for his love has helped my work and has brought its fruits even to my lips. My love is even the Lord ; wherefore will I sing him, for I am strong when I praise him and I have faith in him . . .’ (XVI, p. 97).

(Then the Son was sent by the Most High.)

‘Thus were all the nations gathered and the truly begotten Son of the Father Most High appeared ; he inherited the universe and he received it and the plan of many was set at nought.

‘For all the apostates rebelled and fled ; and they perished who persecuted in their wrath.

‘Now the letter (that had come from heaven, that is the command of the Most-High sending his Son into this world) was a large table wholly written by the finger of God ; and the name of the Father was upon it, together with that of the Son and the Holy Ghost, to reign for ever world without end. Amen.’

The hymns of Clement of Alexandria, who was a philosopher, a theologian and a poet, are not inferior to the odes of Solomon either as regards their poetic inspiration or in the depth of their symbolism. We quote only a few strophes because they are well known :

Bridle of colts untamed . . .
Wing of unwandering birds . . .
Rudder of youth unbending,
Shepherd, with wisdom tending
Lambs of the royal flock :
Thy simple children bring
In one, that they may sing
In solemn lays
Their hymns of praise
With guileless lips to Christ their King.
King of saints, almighty Word
Of the Father, highest Lord ;
Wisdom's head and chief ;
Assuagement of all grief ;
Lord of all time and space,
Jesus, Saviour of our race ;
Shepherd who dost us keep ;
Husbandman who tillest,
Bit to restrain us, Rudder
To guide us as thou willest ;
Of the all-holy flock celestial wing ;
Fisher of men whom thou to life dost bring ;
From evil sea of sin,
And from the billowy strife,
Gathering pure fishes in,
Caught with sweet bait of life :
Lead us, Shepherd of the sheep . . .
Life that never can decay,
Fount of mercy . . .
Let us sucklings join to raise
With pure lips our hymns of praise,
As our grateful offering,
Clean and pure to Christ our King.

(Transl. by Rev. W. Wilson, M.A., vol. VI of Ante-Nicene Christ. Library, 1871, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh.)

The hymns of Clement of Alexandria were probably written for the catechumens, so that they would have a liturgical character. The same is true of the φῶς ἱλαρὸν which perhaps may be assigned to the third century. It is generally held that the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, also called the great doxology, the existence of which is attested at least in the fourth century, is of much earlier date; at any rate in our present liturgy it is one of the few samples of the oldest hymnography.

By reason of the freedom allowed to poetical inspiration, these hymns were about to put into the hands of the heretics an unlooked-for means of spreading their errors without betraying themselves too openly; nor did they fail to avail themselves of it. The gnostics had their hymns, of which a few fragments have come down to us, and even a bishop of the third century, viz. Paul of Samosata, attempted to get his people to sing heretical hymns.

The *Apostolic Constitutions* also contain a few hymns, of which the most famous is the *Te decet laus*. According to some critics, these may go back to the third century. This proves how mistaken is the fairly general idea according to which christian poetry began only about the end of the third century. G. Boissier quotes as the first instance Commodian, a barbarous African poet who is responsible for some curious verses. But it is true to say that with Prudentius, Hilary, Ambrose, and others, the fourth century witnessed a new era in christian poetry, especially in the composition of liturgical hymns.

Every form of prayer and poetry flourished even in the early centuries, though our knowledge barely touches the fringe of this vast subject. All these lyrical pieces should be collected, as was done for the various formularies of the creed. It would then be seen that nowhere as in the Church—and in the Church of the early centuries—was prayer more fervent, and its expression more varied and more sincere. Nor did the Church lose the secret of such compositions in subsequent centuries, for the period during which the Churches of Rome, Gaul, and Spain, as well as the Greek and Eastern Churches, composed their liturgical books, stretches from the fourth to the seventh and even up to the ninth century.

After that date there is a flagging of the genius for liturgical composition, though there are bright flashes here and there. Rémy de Gourmont treats of these works in a book, *Le latin mystique*, which, after all, is only a sketch. The story of christian literature and poetry from the beginning up to the fourteenth century has tempted more than one scholar in England, France, Italy, Germany (Ebert, Raby, Gaselee, Labriolle, Amatucci). But the subject is far from exhausted and its study has in store many a surprise even for those who think they know that period.

CHAPTER XI

PRAYER TO THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY GHOST

PERHAPS the most striking feature of our Catholic liturgy to-day is that, generally speaking, prayer is addressed to the Father, through the Son, in union with the Holy Ghost. The formula is, as it were, stereotyped, hence all prayers, with the exception, perhaps, of the creeds, which are not prayers properly so called but professions of faith, end with what is called a trinitarian doxology, of which the following is the most usual pattern: *Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost*, or this other one: *through our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.* The doxology enters into the composition of all prayers and by means of the sign of the cross, which has also become a trinitarian doxology, it accompanies every sacrament and, in general, every rite.

Now this law of christian prayer is found in all liturgies throughout the centuries, up to the period embraced by this survey. It gives to our prayer, and to our worship generally, its exclusively christian character.

That prayer should be addressed to God the Father and almighty Creator was to be expected, and in this respect the christians did not differ from the Jews. But prayer addressed to the Son and to the Holy Ghost conjointly with the Father or directly to the Son or to the Holy Ghost—assuredly that in itself was a new fact, unique in its kind and sufficient to distinguish the christian from any other cult.

The faithful continued to worship the Father under the titles of Creator, Almighty, Father, Most High, which the Jews gave him, and one of the oldest religious formulas is that of the creed: '*I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.*' It occurs in almost identical terms in every version of the creed, whatever may be its origin. The epithet *almighty*, *omnipotens*, παντοκράτωρ, is that which recurs perhaps more often than any other in the old liturgies, in the *Didache*, in Justin, and other ancient documents. It is true that when our Lord taught us how to pray, instead of giving to God the title of *Lord almighty*, *maker and master of all things*, he uses a name which brings God near to us, or rather, draws us near to him: *Our Father*, *who art in heaven.* We know that this prayer was for ever on the lips of the christians; it is part of the ritual of Baptism, the Eucharist, and other sacred ceremonies. But though Christ is not named in it, the *Pater noster* is also Christ's prayer, first because he taught it to us and because we know that when the Son called God *our Father* he meant that we should associate ourselves with him in the worship of his Father who is also our Father, and that this prayer should establish between all christians and himself that strong bond of union which makes them all the sons of a common Father and brothers in him. Hence from that time onwards it is called the *Lord's prayer*, that is, the *Prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Son cannot be excluded from the worship paid to the Father, in fact he was directly invoked by his followers. This point is of the utmost importance as showing the nature of their faith in him. The title Lord—κύριος—which in the Old Testament is reserved to the Father, christians bestow likewise on the Son. In the same way the names of *Saviour*, *Redeemer*, *King*, and *Master*, which the Jews reserved exclusively for God, are the very titles under which our Lord was most frequently invoked in christian prayer. The Greek word *ἰχθυς*, fish, became one of the symbols of Christ because each of its letters is the initial of one of our Lord's names (*'Ιήσους χρίστος θεοῦ υἵος σώτηρ*). Perhaps it is this last name which gave rise to the symbolism of the fish, for it was then thought that the dolphin loved to rescue men. S. Paul applies the title *Saviour* now to God the Father, as did the Jews, now to the Son. In point of fact every title that belongs to him is given to the Son; he is the way, the truth, the life, the rock, the word, the intelligence—*Logos*, the power, the utterance, the vine, the shepherd, the redeemer, the king, the head, the first-born of all creation, *alpha* and *omega*, the beginning and the end, the beginning or principle, the lion of Juda, the lamb, the only begotten Son, and whatever other titles there may be.[1] They did not even shrink from borrowing Orpheus from mythology and depicting Christ under his features, for even as Orpheus charmed and attracted wild beasts, so does Christ overcome the wildest of men. Had not a sense of reserve restrained them, they would have compared him to Hercules, but for this we must wait until de Maistre's time, who did indeed call our Lord the *christian Hercules!*

In the Old Testament the prophets foretold that the Messias would be a priest of a new worship, according to the order of Melchisedech. Some of them conceived the Messianic era as that of a more perfect cult. There are occasional flashes of light athwart the darkness of their oracles. They assert that God will no longer have bloody sacrifices, for he requires a perfect sacrifice; there is to be a new priesthood and all men of all nations, not the Jews alone, shall be called to praise and worship the one true God.

This is what Christ himself taught at the cleansing of the temple when he declared that the temple, that is

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[1] Cf. Card. Pitra, *Christi nomina*, in *Spicil. Solesm.*, t. III, pp. 446, 447.

God's house, must be nothing else but a *house of prayer*, and that God seeks true worshippers who worship him *in spirit and in truth.* Jesus, therefore, the head and ruler of the kingdom of heaven, is acknowledged as the high priest of the new religion.

In an argument of wonderful depth, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews proves that the Mosaic and levitical priesthood is abolished, that the temple is no more than the shadow of the things that were fulfilled in Christ, that the sacrifices of old are superseded by the perfect sacrifice of the one true and eternal high priest. The priesthood of Aaron, which was the perquisite of one family and the birthright of all his descendants, is replaced by another priesthood, that of Melchisedech, a priesthood no longer transmitted with the blood, but by the spirit and by grace.

The expression *in nomine Domini*—in the name of the Lord, has recurred already several times in these pages. We find it in S. Paul, the Acts, and even in the gospels, and so frequently that it must strike an attentive reader. Here we have a fact of capital importance in the story of christian worship. Until now, whenever *in nomine Domini* occurred in the Bible, the meaning was *in the name of God* (*the Father*). *To swear in the name of the Lord*, *to bless in the name of the Lord*, *to sing in the name of the Lord*, *to exalt the name of the Lord*, *to fear the name of God*, *to act in the name of the Lord our God*—these are all expressions found on every page of the Old Testament, more particularly in the psalms. Now for the name of the Lord Jesus to have been associated in the same common formula with that of the Lord God, so that at times it was even substituted for it, and that from the very beginning of the Church, surely that is a fact the importance of which it is impossible to exaggerate. Jesus Christ had himself spoken of those who should cast out devils, *in his name*, who should be persecuted *for his name's sake*, etc. (Matt. vii, 22 ; xviii, 20, etc.). And S. Paul writes to the Colossians : ' All whatsoever you do in word or in work, *do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*' (Col. iii, 17), and to the Ephesians : ' Giving thanks always for all things, *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*' (Eph. v, 20).

Was the formula accompanied by a gesture representing the cross? The text of Commodian already quoted (Chap. VIII) allows us to answer in the affirmative. Moreover, the formula taken by itself proves that Christ, seated at the right hand of the Father, receives our supplications, even as the Father receives them. *In the name of the Lord*, therefore, means as much as *in the name of God.*

Before dying a martyr's death S. Polycarp, in the second century, addresses a prayer '*to the Lord God almighty, Father of the well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have known thee*,' and he concludes with the words : '*wherefore I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee through the immortal and heavenly high-priest Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son, through whom glory is given to thee, also to him and to the Holy Ghost, now and in all ages to come. Amen.*'

Afra, the famous martyr of Augsburg, addresses her prayer directly to Jesus Christ : '*I give thee thanks, Lord Jesus Christ, that thou hast accepted me as a victim to the glory of thy name, thou who wast immolated upon the cross for the salvation of the whole world, the just one for the unjust, the beneficent one for the wicked, the blessed one for those accursed, the innocent one for sinners. I offer my sacrifice to thee who with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest, God, world without end. Amen.*

The invocation of the Holy Spirit is less frequent than that of the Son in the ancient liturgy, just as it is rare in our present liturgy. However, S. Paul speaks of those who are *baptized in the Holy Ghost* and the apostles use the formula : *it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us.*[1] The rôle of the Holy Ghost in the

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[1] Acts xv, 28.

New Testament has recently been the subject of a searching study which leaves nothing to be desired. The allusion in Hebrews ix, 14 should also be noted.

Pentecost, the feast of the Holy Ghost, shares the antiquity and solemnity of Easter, in fact both feasts are but one festival. The fifty days between Easter and Pentecost are holy days and at the beginning, almost up to the fourth century, they were practically the only festivals of the ecclesiastical cycle. The *epiclesis* or invocation of the Holy Ghost is an essential element of the Mass in the ancient liturgies. We see it in the anaphora of Hippolytus. In a passage which may not have been sufficiently noticed, Mgr. Duchesne says: 'In the first christian churches there is, as it were, a liturgy of the Holy Ghost, subsidiary to that of Christ, a true liturgy with a real presence and Communion.'[1]

In the second century the Montanists fastened upon the idea. The Son having come into this world, they awaited and implored the advent and reign of the Holy Ghost. The error was promptly condemned by the Church, but it led astray a few fine intellects, among them Tertullian. It may be that, as so often happens, this exaggeration led to a reaction in the opposite direction.

But why oppose the Person of the Holy Ghost to that of the Father and the Son? All three are united in the doxology which, as we remarked at the beginning of this chapter, was destined to become the most popular expression of christian prayer.[2] Whereas in the Old Testament the doxology is addressed to God, S. Paul places the Son on the same plane as the Father, even as he shows him seated at his right hand. Here the Holy Ghost also has his place, and as early as the first or second century, in the Odes of Solomon, in S. Polycarp, Origen, and Hippolytus, we meet with doxologies in which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are invoked either together or separately. During the Arian controversies of the fourth century these formulas were the subject of prolonged discussion, but the christian people did not wait for its teachers—who often lag behind it—in order to unite in its prayers the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost as they are united in the rite of Baptism and in the various creeds. The latter, as we have said already, are after all only a doxology in the shape of a profession of faith.

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[1] *Origines du Culte*, 1908, p. 48. The expression is perhaps subject to correction, but the idea it expresses deserves to be noted. The references are to the French text owing to my not having at hand the English translation (Translator's note).

[2] Cf. also ch. X, *Forms of Prayer*.

CHAPTER XII

THE CULT OF THE MARTYRS, OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, THE ANGELS AND THE SAINTS

FAITH in Christ, the love of Christ, devotion to Christ, was the ideal that inspired the christians of the period included in our study, and such an ideal was then likely to lead very far, viz. to imprisonment, to torture, and even to death. Stephen, the first deacon, was stoned ; James, the first bishop of Jerusalem, was cast from the pinnacle of the temple ; Peter and the other Apostles were scourged and proscribed. S. Paul draws up a long catalogue of the things he had endured for Christ : ‘ They are the ministers of Christ,’ he says, speaking of his enemies, ‘ I am more ; . . . in deaths often ; of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea. In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren. In labour and painfulness, in much watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. . . .’[1] And at last martyrdom crowned his apostolate, like that of Peter. Under Nero the persecution at Rome was general and exceedingly cruel. Christians were burned at the stake with a refinement of cruelty that moved even the frigid soul of Tacitus. Under

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[1] 2 Cor. xi, 23 ff. *passim.*

Trajan, so we learn from Pliny, the christians were persecuted in Bithynia. But the persecution became particularly extensive and severe in the third century and at the beginning of the fourth under emperors such as Decius and Diocletian, whose aim was the extermination of christianity. A certain number of the poor victims took advantage of the permission granted by our Lord—they took to flight;—others compromised with their conscience by putting their signature to certain papers—*libelli*—thus securing at least a respite; lastly, not a few apostatized. It was natural that those who remained steadfast, confessing their faith in the midst of torments often harrowing, should be looked up to as heroes by their brethren who visited them in their prisons, kissed and dressed their wounds and, after their death, took up their bodies with touching reverence, preserving as precious relics the linen or clothes dyed with their blood. The title conferred on them—*martyr*—is a Greek word signifying *witness*. Just as the apostles had been the witnesses of our Lord's resurrection, so was the martyrs' death a precious testimony to Christ. The word *confessor*, at one moment synonymous with *martyr*, for it also designates one who has confessed the faith, was restricted, at a later period, to designate those who endured imprisonment and other tortures, or those who were condemned to the mines, through they did not actually die for the faith. From the fourth century onwards the title was extended to such as had distinguished themselves by their apostolic labours, their doctrine, and their holiness, such as SS. Martin, Ambrose, Augustine, John Chrysostom. The fact that the *Communicantes* and the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* of the Roman canon contain only names of martyrs is by itself a proof of its great antiquity. The martyrs were the objects of a cult of which we find traces as early as the first years of the third century. They were invoked as all-powerful intercessors with Christ. Among the proofs one may quote the *graffiti* or inscriptions roughly scratched with knife or chisel upon, or near, their tombs, which exist to this day. These inscriptions, often in bad Latin and even worse spelling, are worth more than gold to us because they tell of the faith and confidence of these poor christians who implored the martyrs not to forget them now that they were with God.

Very often, too, a martyr, instead of being buried in an ordinary *loculus* like the rank and file, was placed under an altar, in a chapel of the catacombs, and the anniversary of his death was kept as a holiday. 'We know,' says Père Delehaye, 'that the Eucharistic liturgy constituted the essential element of these solemnities, that the martyr's name was mentioned during the sacrifice and that special honour was paid to him.'[1] The custom of funeral repasts was not yet universally abolished, but certain deplorable abuses eventually led to their complete suppression. In a document which may be prior to the council of Nicea, we read : 'We sing hymns, psalms, and songs of praise to him who sees all things, and in memory of these men we celebrate the Eucharist, the sacrifice from which are banished blood and violence. The fragrance of incense is not sought therein, nor the brazier, but a pure light which sufficiently illumines those who pray. And there is often added a modest repast for the benefit of the poor and destitute.'[2] 'Without striving for a full and detailed reconstruction of such an anniversary,' says P. Delehaye, 'we may yet assert that nothing in these gatherings recalled the gloom of the every-day funeral ceremonies. The letter of the church of Smyrna on the death of Polycarp breathes only joy and enthusiasm, and the triumphant procession that escorted to the cemetery the body of S. Cyprian admirably expresses what the faithful felt, and these feelings harmonized perfectly with their lofty conception of martyrdom.'[1] In the fourth century the tombs of the martyrs became the objects of pilgrimages; it was deemed a precious privilege to be buried close to them, in a word, the cult of the martyrs took vast proportions, as did, in fact, the whole liturgy of the Church. The translation of the relics or of the body of a martyr, gave occasion to popular festivals celebrated with much pomp and splendour. Even before that period and as early as the second and third century the martyr's feast found a place in the liturgical year beside the solemnities of Easter and Pentecost. The date of his death, carefully noted, became that of his feast. Thus began the *Martyrology*, the *libro d'oro* containing the martyr's names. The Roman Church, which had been made illustrious by the death of the most famous among the martyrs, such as SS. Peter and Paul, SS. Lawrence, Xystus, Cornelius, Agnes, Cecilia, and many others, took the initative in this matter also, and its martyrology, drawn up in the fourth century, is one of the most precious documents of ecclesiastical history.

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[1] *Les origines du culte des Martyrs*, Bruxelles, 1912, p. 49.

[2] *Oratio ad sanctorum cœtum.* Cf. P. Delehaye, p. 50.

According to a recent theory this devotion to the martyrs was only a survival of ancient pagan hero-worship. This exploded theory is based on nothing more solid than certain superficial resemblances. The cult of the martyrs was a natural development and is only a practical application of the principle of the communion of Saints. If there is one incontrovertible fact it is that christians prayed for one another. In every one of his epistles S. Paul beseeches the christian communities to pray for him. If prayer was offered for the departed who had slept in the Lord (Chap. VII) and if their prayers were asked for, there was a far stronger motive to pray to the martyrs who had suffered for Christ. No need to look elsewhere for the explanation of a cult which is so easily understood.

As a matter of fact people would not even wait for the martyrs' death : they had recourse to their mediation even whilst they were still in the flesh. The persecutions, especially that of Decius, about the middle of the third century, occasioned numerous defections. These *lapsi* or fallen christians, by reason of their apostasy, were excluded from the Church. Some of them, overcome by remorse, would not even await the cessation of the persecution before endeavouring to recover their place in the Church. The bishops, however, would not re-admit them unless they first underwent a lengthy period of severe penance. In this emergency the *lapsi* and the *libellatici* could think of nothing better than to plead with the martyrs and confessors in their prison. These, moved to compassion, were in the habit of giving to these deserters letters recommending them to the mercy of the authorities of the Church. In the course of time the practice led to abuses. Some of these testimonials—*libelli pacis*—signed by the confessors of the faith caused much anxiety to certain bishops, notably to S. Cyprian, and at times they became the occasion of real schisms. We only allude to these controversies because they bear witness to the extraordinary prestige and influence, even during their lifetime, of the martyrs and confessors of the faith.

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[1] *Oratio ad sanctorum cœtum.* Cf. P. Delehaye, p. 50.

The supernatural rôle of the angels is often described in the pages of the Old Testament. Christians could not fail to pay them reverence. The Archangels SS. Michael and Gabriel are mentioned in the New Testament. As a matter of fact on this point it became necessary to restrain the somewhat indiscreet fervour of some christians. S. Paul felt compelled on several occasions, notably in his Epistle to the Hebrews, to remind the faithful that Christ is above the Thrones and Dominations, in a word, above the angelic hierarchies. In order to rebut the reproach of atheism levelled against the christians, S. Justin testified to their worshipping the Father, the Son, the angelic hosts, and the spirit of the prophets (Apol. I, vi). This precaution of linking the angels to Christ, just as christian art was to do later on, deserves to be noted. Athenagoras speaks like Justin. Origen also knows this cult but warns the faithful against possible abuses. One need only bear in mind the absurdities of gnostic angelology to appreciate the wisdom of these warnings. In the fourth century, when gnosticism was no longer dangerous, the cult of the angels was greatly extended, especially in the East. Altars and churches were erected in honour of SS. Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. It was long thought that the famous signs XMΓ stood for *Christos*, *Michael*, *Gabriel*, though it would seem that we have to give up this interpretation. But its long acceptance by well-informed epigraphists is in itself a remarkable fact.[1]

Circumstances of a very different kind delayed the development of the cult of the Blessed Virgin. Our Lady was given her proper place in theology long before she secured it in the liturgy. The gospel of S. Luke states in a few verses all the splendours and glories of Mary. The parallel, or rather the contrast between Eve and Mary, between her who caused the ruin of the human race and the second Eve who gave it a Saviour and a Redeemer, is already classic. S. Irenæus seems to have been the first to establish it. The clause, *conceived of the Holy Ghost*, *born of the Virgin Mary*, which is part of the earliest creeds, brings home to the catechumens that the Virgin birth is an article of faith. There is a certain amount of controversy about the representations of the Virgin Mary in the Roman catacombs and in Africa, but several of them seem to point to the existence of a real cult. As regards festivals or holidays, the liturgical cycle was not yet worked out in the fourth century; in fact, it consists exclusively of the solemnities of Easter and Pentecost and contains local feasts of martyrs. It was only after the peace of the Church that the liturgy was able to put forth all its resources. The first fruits of the new era of tranquillity are seen at Jerusalem, in the last quarter of the fourth century, in the feasts of the Epiphany, the Ascension, the Saturday of Lazarus, and the *Encænia.* But here also the feast is due to a local occurrence. The birth of the Saviour, his baptism, Palm Sunday, Easter, and Pentecost are intimately linked to Jerusalem or some spot in its immediate neighbourhood. All feasts, then, with the possible exception of Easter and Pentecost, were at first local events. The feasts of Our Lady, it would seem, followed a similar course ; that of the Annunciation began at Nazareth, the Purification, or Presentation in the temple, at Jerusalem. the Assumption at Ephesus. Various circumstances gave rise to the other solemnities during the course of the Middle Ages.

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[1] D.A.C.L., t. I, col. 1691 ff.

CHAPTER XIII

PRIVATE WORSHIP AND UNOFFICIAL RITES

ONE of the things that we hope to have put in a clear light in the foregoing chapters is the part taken in the liturgy by the general body of the faithful. It was a much larger one than to-day. In that early period bishops, clergy, and people would meet on certain days, at an appointed hour, mostly during the night or in the early hours of the morning, for the celebration of the Eucharist. We have described the rôle assigned to each order in the drama of the christian sacrifice which is truly the offering and sacrifice of all, in union with Christ—a banquet to which all are invited. If we study the gathering we shall see the people taking a real part in the proceedings.

At the offertory they present the bread and wine which are to be the matter of consecration, also oil, fruits and vegetables and other gifts which will be blessed before the Communion. Their acclamations are the answer to those of the priest; they obey the voice or sign of the deacons who indicate the gestures to be made, the attitudes to be taken, the answer to be made to the acclamations. The kiss of peace is given to all and by all and the *prayer of the faithful* at the offertory is a supplication for all the needs of the Church, and not only for the faithful, both clergy and laity, but for the whole of society, for princes and magistrates, for pagans, Jews, and heretics. Here we have a prayer that is truly Catholic and universal—an 'international' prayer, as we should say nowadays.

The sick and the absent are not forgotten and the symbol of the unity and charity which unites all christians in the love of Christ, the Holy Eucharist, is taken to them, nay, the ordinary faithful enjoy the peculiar privilege of taking to their homes this divine food so that they may communicate themselves on those days of the week on which there is no synaxis.

Like the Mass, the other sacraments are also public functions in which all take part. Thus the faithful know and accept the aspirants to Baptism, Ordination, and even Matrimony. For some time exorcisms were practised by all christians, also divers anointings and blessings, as we learn from the 'Shepherd' of Hermas.

In those early days the life of the followers of Christ was pre-eminently a social one. By Baptism a christian became a member of a vast family which has been compared at times—and it must be said without adequate proofs—to the Roman *collegia* and even to a secret society. This is an obvious exaggeration; nevertheless it is true that at that epoch all the members of this society knew one another, a strong bond of union linked them together, they helped one another, they even had certain gestures and passwords which they alone understood, such as the sign of the cross, the sacred fish or *ichthus* and the *Maranatha.*

This peculiar intimacy is best seen in their worship, for worship forms a strong link between all the members. The word *lay*, or *secular*, strikes a rather strident note to-day—it is nearly always taken in a bad sense. Contemporary speech, which is not invariably well inspired, has perverted the original meaning of the word so that the epithet *lay* (*laïque* in French) is applied to a man without religion or to one who professes to be a stranger to all religious feeling. Etymologically the word has quite another meaning; it is derived from λάος—

people—but in christian parlance it designates a chosen people, the people of God. In our liturgical prayers the bishop commends to God the faithful who are his *nation*, his *people*, his *family*. S. Peter writes as follows to the christians of his time: '*You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people . . . who in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God*' (1 Peter ii, 9). Converts from paganism, and more especially the neophytes of Jewish origin, understood the full significance of this frequently inculcated teaching. The words imply the existence, at one time, of a people which was *God's people*, the chosen people; that God rejected this people when they crucified his Son and that their place was taken by a new race, the Gentiles. The epistles of S. Paul which repeatedly allude to this fact, the parable also of the lord of the vineyard rejecting the labourers who had murdered his son and giving it to other workmen, were publicly read and commented upon and the faithful were well aware of their meaning.

Such teaching was bound to bring about a close union between clergy and people, all the more as both clergy and laity used the same prayers and the same psalmody, so much so that scholars find it exceedingly difficult to discover contemporary evidence which would show that the clergy were under an obligation to say any special prayers apart from those which the whole christian body recited at the public gatherings. Whilst firmly maintaining the hierarchical principle the Church did not shrink from telling the ordinary christian—following in this the above-quoted text of S. Peter—that he too was a priest, at least *in radice*, that is, radically or in germ as the theologians say. The Apocalypse inculcates this doctrine and Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and especially Tertullian, lay great stress on it. The latter points out to the newly baptized that they have received an unction similar to that of the priest, and that this is why they are allowed to take a share—often a large one—in public worship. In his Montanist period, Tertullian grossly exaggerated this doctrine, so much so that he wrote one day, probably in a fit of temper, and without apparently noticing that he was contradicting statements which he had himself previously proved up to the hilt: ‘Are we not likewise priests and are we not doing all that the priest does?’ Heretics both ancient and modern were not slow in fastening upon this phrase in support of their denial of any real difference between priests and laymen.[1] However, when stripped of exaggerations, Tertullian's idea remains true, for Irenæus before him, and nearer to us Bossuet, de la Taille, Lepin, have reminded the faithful of the part that falls to their lot in the Eucharistic sacrifice and in the other sacraments, and recently a Review, well known for its orthodoxy, had an article entitled: *Le Sacerdoce du laïque*—the layman's priesthood.

The question of women's participation in divine worship, which is another aspect of the problem and one that greatly troubles some of our separated brethren, did not even present itself in the early centuries, whatever some writers may have said to the contrary. In this respect S. Paul laid down rules which caused no surprise in the mind of the Jews, for they were in full agreement with the law of Moses. These regulations were accepted without the slightest recrimination. The few instances to the contrary which have been quoted are usually taken from heretical circles, such as the Gnostics and the Montanists who ignored the laws of the Church. The ministry of the deaconesses and consecrated widows was in no way at variance with the general legislation which we have described.[2]

None the less, whatever place public worship may have held in the life of the faithful, it must not be thought that it exhausted their devotion. On this point it is enough to recall what was said in Chapter I concerning uninterrupted prayer and the personal homage that each one must pay to God in the sanctuary of his soul. In addition, therefore, to public worship, the early christians also practised private devotions, but these also were closely linked to the liturgy. By far the most striking instance of this may be seen in the custom mentioned above of taking the consecrated host to their homes, where it was jealously guarded from the eyes of the profane.

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[1] For instance, Hatch, *The Organisation of the Early Christian Church*, London, 1895. Tertullian's text is from ch. VII, *De exhort. cast.*

[2] *The Place of Woman in the Church*, "Tablet," 16 and 30 March 1918; D.A.C.L., article *Femme*.

In the Acts of the Apostles we also find allusions to private prayer. The *Didache* recommends the recitation of the Lord's Prayer three times a day. This is a private prayer. The apologist Aristides, Tertullian, so often mentioned in these pages, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and many others, are unanimous in urging the necessity of private prayer. The canonical Hours of Terce, Sext and None were private devotions before they became part of the official prayer. However, all these devotions have a liturgical flavour. Thus grace before and after meals bears so close a resemblance to the Eucharistic prayer that the question is whether these prayers were the accompaniment of an ordinary repast, such as the *agape*, or of the Eucharist itself.

In the *Apostolic Constitutions* we discover traces of prayers recited at meals. Some particularly interesting ones ar found in a book—*de virginitate*—which some modern scholars ascribe to S. Athanasius and which at least belongs to his time. Though of a later period than the one embraced by our survey, these prayers certainly represent an older tradition, and the following quotation will show that even a christian's meal was meant to recall to his mind the Eucharistic repast: '*We give thee thanks*, *O Father*, *for the holy resurrection thou hast mani-*

fested to us through Jesus Christ, thy Son ; and as this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, and having been gathered together became one, so let thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth, into thy kingdom ; for thine is the glory, and the power, through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen.

Then there follows the Lord's Prayer.

After the meal the following prayer is said : '*The merciful and compassionate God hath given food to them that fear him.*' Then follows the doxology : '*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,*' and the prayer : '*O God almighty, O Lord Jesus Christ, whose name is above every name, we give thee thanks and we praise thee for that thou hast vouchsafed to give us a share of thy gifts and this material food. Grant to us likewise to dread and fear thy heavenly and blessed name, lest we transgress thy commandments. Imprint upon our hearts thy law and thy justice. Sanctify our spirit, our soul, our heart, through thy Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, with whom be to thee glory, empire, honour and adoration, world without end. Amen.*

But the most remarkable of all these private devotions is the so-called *prayer of the martyrs.* We have already spoken of it. When the martyrs stood before the judge, or whilst in prison or on the way to execution, there fell from their lips fervent prayers inspired, for the most part, by the liturgy. As a rule they were short and simple : *Deo gratias ! Deo gratias agimus ! Gloria tibi Domine ! I give thee thanks, O Lord, who gavest me patience to endure torments and who didst deign to make me a sharer of thine eternal glory.*

I beseech thee, O Christ, hear me ! O Christ, give me strength to suffer for thee !

At other times the prayer was more ample as, for instance, the celebrated prayer of S. Polycarp, or that of S. Severus of Antioch, or that of S. Cyprian which we quote, because in it we seem to hear an echo of *the* *prayer of the faithful* which the bishop used to recite at Mass:

'*Let us pray that peace may be soon restored to us; that we may be quickly helped in our hiding-places and in our dangers and that those things may be fulfilled which the Lord deigns to show to his servants, to wit, the restoration of the Church to her former estate, the security of our salvation, after the rains serenity, after darkness light; after the storms and whirlwinds a peaceful calm, the kindly help of his fatherly love, the accustomed grandeur of the divine Majesty whereby the blasphemers may be restrained, the repentance of the lapsed renewed and the steadfast faith of the persevering glorified.*'[1]

Further proofs are found in the numerous works on prayer among the writings of the ante-Nicene Fathers. Clement of Alexandria, Origen in the East and Tertullian and S. Cyprian in the West have special treatises on private prayer and urge the faithful to practise it.[2] As a matter of fact we find in their writings prayers of their own composition which, if they have not a specifically liturgical character, owe their inspiration, as a rule, to some liturgical theme.[3]

For the sake of completeness it would be necessary to examine even the christian inscriptions and epitaphs which have been discovered in Phrygia, Pannonia, Greece, Macedonia, Palestine, in Gaul, in Africa, and especially at Rome. Those of Pectorius and Abercius have been quoted. In these inscriptions we constantly find expressions reminiscent of the exorcisms, invocations, supplications, and acclamations in use in the liturgy, for instance: *Peace be with thee; mayst thou live with God and with Christ!* or *with God and with the Holy Ghost; Peace to thee in heaven! mayst thou live in the name of*

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[1] Ep. VII *ad Clerum*, P.L. IV, 251 (Ante-Nicene Library, Vol. VIII, p. 32).

[2] Cf. Von der Goltz, *Das Gebet*, p. 261 ff.

[3] Cf. *Liturgical Prayer*, XIV.

Christ! He rests in peace, in Christ. His soul is in heaven, with the Saints; in the name of Christ Jesus.[1]

Apart from these prayers there are a few rites which had not, or have no longer, an official character, but we may examine them in this place because they bear features which were at one time borrowed from the liturgy. First in importance is the *agape.* Originally this repast was in close conjunction with the Eucharist. It was severed from the Eucharistic celebration probably about the middle of the second century. Nevertheless, by reason of its origin, it retained a religious and charitable character, and it long remained a true love-feast, a feast of brotherhood, as its name indicates—*ἀγαπή*, love, charity.

S. Paul, whilst drawing attention to the abuses that disfigured it at Corinth, describes its usual features. The whole community, rich and poor, slaves and masters, the widows, virgins, orphans, beggars, the bishop, priests and deacons, the cantors, the fossores, the local clergy or travelling missionaries, all take their place at a common table, for the *agape* is a common meal and there is no distinction of ranks. We can imagine what it must have meant for a labourer, a poor destitute widow, to be seated next to a wealthy patrician lady of Rome, or for a slave to rub shoulders with his master and to eat out of the same dish. The banquet began with a blessing, of which several versions have come down to us.

Gladness seasoned these feasts, but the rules of seemliness and decorum were strictly observed. If need were, the presence of the bishop, which the earliest ecclesiastical canons demanded, would have been an efficient check on possible excesses. At these repasts, says Tertullian, we drink, but not so as to become intoxicated, as was the custom at pagan banquets, and those who have an aptitude for it, sing or improvise some religious hymn. Perhaps the *Odes of Solomon* and other canticles of this golden age of christian charity were composed under these very circumstances. Everything tended to recall the mystic banquet of heaven of which Christ had spoken so often, the table at which a place was to be reserved for those who should have been his followers. Still more vividly did their thoughts turn towards the Eucharistic repast which, for a time at least, immediately followed the *agape*, in fact the connexion between the two repasts was so close that archæologists are not agreed as to whether certain banquets described in ancient documents or depicted on the walls of the Catacombs, are the Eucharistic sacrifice or only the *agape*. At one time these feasts, which bore a striking but purely external resemblance to those celebrated by the *hetæriæ* (ἑταιρία—brotherhood), gave umbrage to the imperial police, so that Trajan forbade them. It became necessary to celebrate them in secret, in the same way as the Eucharist, and Celsus bitterly rebukes the christians because of their secret gatherings.

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[1] Leclercq, *Monumenta Ecclesiæ Liturgica*, t. I, p. 6 ff.

The funeral repasts for which the faithful gathered after the obsequies or on the anniversary of the departed, bear a close resemblance to the *agape*, though their origin is different. It is generally held that they were a christian form of the pagan *parentalia*. These gatherings took place especially round the tombs of the martyrs in the cemeteries, in fact they were soon merged in the vigils or night watches described in Chapter I and frequently gave occasion to disorders which called for the Church's condemnation. There was singing and dancing at the tomb of S. Cyprian ; small wonder then that S. Ambrose and S. Augustine and other bishops denounced these vigils with great vehemence and that they should have been wholly suppressed. But so inveterate was the habit of feasting in connexion with funerals, that it lasted throughout the Middle Ages, nor is it quite extinct to-day. The *triclinium*, or dining-room, the ruins of which have been discovered near the Catacombs or the cemeteries, was destined for these repasts. We learn something of the harmless cheerfulness and expansiveness of these fraternal gatherings from certain inscriptions found on ancient christian drinking-cups or glasses: *Drink in Christ! Drink in the peace of God! Drink reverently! Make a libation, drink and live! O worthiest of friends, mayst thou drink and live with all thine and on thy part drink our health!*[1]

The *eulogia* was another observance closely related to the official liturgy, yet retaining the character of a private devotion. In the first century the word, which means a *blessing*, was a synonym of the Eucharist. S. Paul speaks of the chalice of benediction—τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας—that is the Eucharistic cup, and after him, the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ was indifferently called *eulogia* and *Eucharist.* Either word is an equally appropriate name for a sacrament which is the thanksgiving *par excellence* and God's highest *blessing* bestowed on men. The portion of the Eucharist which was sent to the absent and sick, to those in prison, and even to churches at a distance, was designated by the word *eulogia.* The risk of profanation, however, to which such journeys exposed the consecrated Element, led to the gradual disuse of a practice which was finally abrogated by the council of Laodicea, A.D. 365. Under the name of *fermentum* a custom only slightly different from the *eulogia* was observed during the latter centuries of the Middle Ages. The word *eulogia* survived the custom which it at first designated by taking a new meaning. The bread which had been offered at the offertory, but which had not been consecrated, was distributed among the clergy, the servers at the altar, or the poor. The *pain bénit,* still distributed in French churches, seems to have had no other origin. Soon the word *eulogia* came to designate any object that had been blessed and even any kind of gift or present. But here we are far from its original meaning.

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[1] Liturgical Prayer, XXV, also Garucci, *Vetri ornati nei cimiteri dei cristiani primitivi,* Roma, 1858.

Although used in the official worship, the sign of the cross is primarily a private devotion, one that should sanctify every action of a christian, for it is really the *acting* or the expression by means of a gesture of the '*in nomine Domini*' or '*in nomine Christi*.'

Fasting also is both a private devotion and a public act of religion. The vigiliar liturgy presupposes and imposes a fast. As a general rule, a fast is always connected with a feast or a liturgical ceremony. Wednesday and Friday, the days on which there is a *statio* or assembly, are likewise fast-days. The solemnity of Easter is preceded by a fast which by the end of the third century becomes the season of Lent ; the Eucharistic fast is one of the earliest and most universal laws of the Church. The fast in preparation for Baptism is less rigorously observed, though it is still prescribed. But even apart from these occasions the faithful, prompted by their own devotion, undertook voluntary fasts, in fact this was by far the most frequent ascetical exercise at a period when there was no question as yet of the *discipline* and other penitential instruments known to us.

It is possible, in fact it is even probable, that there were then, as there are to-day, other private devotions, but it is as unlikely that they were as numerous. The supreme devotion, which absorbed all others, was devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, sent by him into this world to be our Saviour, who, in the Holy Ghost, offers to him our supplications. This devotion found its expression in the liturgy of the Mass and in the prayers that accompany it, in the rites of Baptism, and in the other public ceremonies. During the Middle Ages, and more particularly since the sixteenth century, a number of new devotions have sprung up. Beginning as private devotions, they were subsequently taken up by the Church when their object seemed to justify such action on her part, and so they ended by being grafted upon the official liturgy.

The gradual progress of these devotions may be followed step by step, thanks to an abundance of documentary evidence. This is particularly true of the feasts of the Blessed Trinity, the Blessed Sacrament, the Sacred Heart, the Precious Blood. All these feasts are only a new presentment, or a development of principles and devotions whose origin is found in the gospel.

It may be said that these and other devotions of the same kind became more and more numerous according as the faithful lost their hold upon the old, official liturgy. The middle of the last century saw a reaction. This tends to recall the faithful to the devotions of their fathers, but the movement, notwithstanding the efforts made to give it momentum, is not yet as universal as we could wish it to be.

During the first three centuries, the position was very different. The religious and social life of the christians was too intense, the public worship too absorbing to leave room for the various currents that took shape in the Middle Ages or in our own days, for it is this period which gave birth to many devotions now so popular.[1]

From what has been said it follows that if a christian ought before all things to feel with the Church and to enter into the spirit of her liturgy, which is pre-eminently a social worship, he still retains his own individuality. It goes without saying that a man scarcely fulfils his duty to God by assisting once a week at a brief service, as so many lukewarm christians do. A true christian is well aware that on leaving the sacred edifice he does not part with his christian character, but that his home and his private life also must be sanctified. Nevertheless, there is nothing in the life of the christians of the early period that in any way recalls the minutely organized domestic liturgy of the Jews of which the head of the family was the minister, or the custom of the Romans with whom the *paterfamilias* also acted as a kind of domestic priest. In the new society all priestly functions belong exclusively to those who have been appointed by the Church, so that there is a specific difference between the Jewish and the christian conception of the priesthood.

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[1] These are only general considerations and do not claim to be more. They are probably subject to correction. As long as the history of popular devotions—a truly splendid and rich subject—has not been written, the ideas emitted in this chapter may have to be revised in the light of further research.

CHAPTER XIV

LITURGICAL UNITY DURING THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES

WHAT lessons might we not draw from what has been said in the foregoing chapters! What spiritual wealth, what treasures, what interest there is here for the archæologist and the liturgist who, not content with the rôle of detached scholars confining themselves to the study of academic questions, look upon history as a reconstruction of the past!

This history shows us the christians of the early centuries living a life of prayer, jealously preserving the faith received in Baptism, finding in prayer, in their gatherings and the instructions they hear there, the food of their spiritual life whereby they are enabled to bear the severest trials, even imprisonment and death, to prove their loyalty to Christ to whom they swore allegiance in their Baptism. At any rate, such was the conduct of the best of them, those who constituted the pick, as it were, of this élite in the midst of a pagan world. The teaching of the liturgy of those days compels our admiration. Not a gesture, attitude, unction, exorcism, or simple acclamation, such as *Amen*, *Alleluia*, *Pax vobis*, *Dominus vobiscum*, *in nomine Domini*, that is not charged with deepest significance, so that its study yields most weighty arguments to the theologian and the apologist.

But such considerations are outside our scope, though there is one point to which we must draw attention, namely the liturgical unity of those early days.

The fact is all the more noteworthy as there existed far more scope for private initiative in that era which was the formative period of the liturgy. If it is an exaggeration to say that each bishop was free to organize divine worship in his diocese as he pleased, it must be granted that individual initiative had a much wider field than in subsequent centuries. It was not only private prayer that was subject to sudden improvisation, but the very ritual, even that of the sacraments, the establishment of feasts and anniversaries, the composition of hymns and metrical chants were controlled by laws of great elasticity. Which Church first imposed on a catechumen the acceptance of a rule of faith? Which instituted the rite of the *aperitio aurium*, the *traditio* of the Lord's Prayer and of the gospels? Which Church first thought of the repeated exorcisms and adjurations and the triple immersion?

Most of these questions must remain unanswered because the writers of the time are bishops or teachers whose concern is not history but the teaching of the faithful and the exposition of christian doctrine to the flocks entrusted to their care. A few of them write apologies for the Church addressed to the pagans or the Jews; others, philosophers and theologians, love to study the dogmas of our religion in order to expose their very substance; or they wage war against the heretics whilst at the same time establishing their true meaning. The few historians of the period, such as Hegesippus and Julius Africanus, take no notice of such details. Not for a moment do they imagine that some day scholars would jealously gather the smallest information dealing with the practice of christian worship. Hence there must needs be many gaps in this essay. It would be saying too much to assert that we know with complete certainty when and where the oldest formulas of the creed were composed; which rites or prayers are of Egyptian, Syriac, Roman, or African origin.

However, the remarkable thing about all this is that, no matter whence they originate, all these initiatives coalesce in one harmonious whole. Nowhere, except in the camp of heresy, do these individual undertakings overstep a certain limit; all seems to obey a common law and to have a common tendency. Formulas or particular ceremonies may be slightly different, but Baptism is everywhere the same sacrament, in all churches it has the same meaning and result; everywhere its *matter* is water and its *form* the invocation of the Trinity; everywhere there are exorcisms, unctions, and a renunciation of Satan; everywhere Confirmation is given by the laying-on of hands, accompanied, as a general rule, by an anointing with oil. The same rule holds good of Penance, Ordination, and other rites. Everywhere the faithful have on their lips *Amen*, *Alleluia*, *Pax vobis*, *Dominus vobiscum;* everywhere they assemble on Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday for the *synaxis;* everywhere Easter and Pentecost recall the cycle of the great mysteries of their faith and foreshadow the developments of the very next period; everywhere the Mass and the rite of Ordination conform to a universal type. Notwithstanding all divergences on points of detail, it is possible to feel the presence of a hidden power, an authority which, if need be, represses abuses and curtails liberty where it is abused, and which prompts, counsels, corrects, and in all things maintains a common spirit.

As early as the second century Hegesippus has a presentiment of the force of the argument of which Tertullian was to make so much—that is *prescription.* Having visited all the churches, beginning with that of Rome, with a view to drawing up lists of bishops so as to establish their apostolic succession, Hegesippus assures us that he found in all of them the same teaching. In the third century Abercius, whose epitaph has been quoted, finds everywhere the symbol of the sacred *ichthus.*

Not yet do we see the spectacle exhibited later on, not without scandal to the faithful and even to the pagans, of heated debates as to whether leavened or unleavened bread should be used for the Eucharist; whether or not Saturday is a fast-day; of how many weeks Lent consists; and other secondary questions of this kind. The only matters which gave rise to a certain amount of discussion at that period were the date of Easter and the reiteration of Baptism. Christian feeling was strong enough in those days to make the faithful realize that since unity is based on essentials, matters of detail may be left to settle themselves. The churches borrowed from one another liturgical rites and formulas, which thus forged a link between them all. As a rule there was a complete absence of jealousy or rivalry between church and church. A very interesting letter of Firmilian, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia and a correspondent of S. Cyprian, singles out the difference in the ritual which existed at that time (about the middle of the third century) in divers churches, a variety which nowise hindered the peace and unity of the Catholic Church (Ep. LXXV, edit. Hartel, C.S.E.L., Vol. III, p. 810 ff.).

There was then far more intercourse between the churches than is generally supposed. No barriers divided one church from another, no spiritual customs hindered free communication. There was much coming and going of missionaries, teachers, pilgrims, itinerant ministers, and even of the simple faithful. Long before the *Didache*, S. Paul laid down rules for missionaries and for the churches that receive them. Letters of the bishops are carried by deacons or acolytes from Carthage to Rome, to Antioch, to Alexandria; this is abundantly proved by the correspondence of S. Cyprian. Hegesippus and Abercius, mentioned a moment ago, have toured all over christendom. Justin also is a great traveller in search of truth in every country and in every school of philosophy, before he discovered christianity and settled at Rome. From the days of S. Paul hospitality is one of the virtues most earnestly urged upon the faithful. Its objects are the missionaries, prophets, teachers, the *domestici fidei*, viz. the servants and preachers of the faith who go from church to church to preach the glad tidings, to wit, that the Messias has come, in the person of Jesus Christ, that he must be acknowledged as the Son of God, the Saviour whose teaching all are bound to embrace. As a rule a missionary, or a christian setting out on a journey, provides himself with letters of recommendation to the other churches. The third epistle of S. John has all the air of being one of those *litteræ commendatitiæ* given to travellers with a view to preventing unpleasant surprises. The *Didache* draws up a list of the tokens by which a true missionary may be recognized.

Notwithstanding all precautions, at times wolves appeared in the guise of shepherds. One of the most biting of Lucian's satires relates the escapades of one of these mountebanks who, during a number of years, enjoyed the hospitality of divers churches whom he deceived by a show of zeal and fervour. Whether true or false, the tale is nevertheless characteristic, for it was only too easy to take in these simple and kindly people who, on the advice of Hermas, Aristides, and others, were always ready to open their doors to anyone introducing himself in the name of the Lord.

But even this constant intercourse, which is yet another proof of the familiarity and brotherly feeling that reigned among the children of the Church, does not adequately account for the maintenance, during these three centuries, of liturgical unity just as during that same period the doctrinal and disciplinary unity was secured. We must look to a more powerful cause, in fact to nothing less than the authority of the Church.

S. Paul already claims the exclusive right of settling in the churches founded by him, all questions appertaining to public worship. We see him condemning abuses, recalling ancient traditions, rejecting the circumcision and other Jewish observances that have no longer any meaning, encouraging a certain amount of initiative whilst laying down limits which must not be overstepped. Other pastors of the Church, S. Clement of Rome, S. Ignatius, S. Cyprian, act in a like manner. The various regulations and canons which go by the name of *apostolic*, and of which we treated in Chapter V, all aim at a common purpose, that is, at bringing back the churches to the same observances, laying down general rules for their guidance and even supplying them with ready-made liturgical formulas.

It is quite clear that in this authoritative process of organization the Roman Church takes the lead. Without now speaking of the decisive action of Popes Victor and Stephen in the questions of Easter and the rebaptizing of heretics, all the more notable initiatives begin at Rome. It is there that, in all probability, the earliest form of the creed was composed; Rome also saw the formulation of the famous canon of Muratori which determines, no doubt with a view to their use in the liturgy, which books were authentic, and were, therefore, suitable for reading at the *synaxis*, and which were to be rejected as spurious. The most popular of all Eucharistic prayers was likewise composed at Rome.

This fact becomes even more apparent in the fourth and fifth century when the earliest *cursus* (order) of the divine office was laid down by Rome. From Rome we also get the oldest calendars and martyrologies, and the custom of varying the prayers of the Mass and other offices, as well as the earliest sacramentaries which bear the names of Popes Leo, Gelasius, and Gregory. True we cannot accept without reservation all the initiatives which the *Liber Pontificalis* attributes to the Popes of the first centuries, but its statements, which are authoritative at least as regards the fifth and sixth century, are often borne out by other ante-Nicene texts in respect to earlier times.

Liturgical unity, which is a consequence of the unity of the Church, is also one of its marks. S. Paul formulates this truth in a phrase of lapidary simplicity : ' One Lord, one faith, one Baptism ' (Eph. iv, 5). And indeed the christian worship of the early centuries is not that of a particular church—it is that of the Church spread over the face of the whole world. In the Canon of the Roman Mass we read : ' We offer them up (these gifts) to thee, first for thy holy Catholic Church, that it may please thee to grant her peace, to watch over her, to bring her to unity, and guide her throughout the world.' These words are but a magnificent echo of the earliest liturgical tradition. We find it in the oldest formulas. S. Hippolytus mentions the Church in his Eucharistic prayer, and his formula, which rests on S. Paul, is all the more weighty in that it mentions the Church in the very doxology which, as has been said, is exclusively consecrated to the glorification of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The clause of the *Te Deum* : ' *Te per orbem terrarum sancta confitetur Ecclesia—Thee holy Church confesses throughout the universe*,' though of a later date (viz. the end of the fourth century) expresses this same idea that the Church's worship is not the worship of a particular assembly but that of the universal Church. This thought it formulated, in varying degrees of felicity, in most *litanies* and in the *prayer of the faithful* recited in all liturgies at the moment of the offertory.

Moreover, the very heretics prove our contention. They begin by doing as they please ; then the Church protests and eventually excommunicates them. S. Irenæus reproaches the Gnostics with following their own fancy both in regard to worship and to doctrine, whilst Tertullian scoffs at the ordinations of heretics, which he declares to be little more than dishonest trickeries. The *hydroparastes* or *aquarians*, the earliest prohibitionists in history, condemn the use of wine and use only bread and water for the consecration at Mass; others, for whom milk has a symbolic meaning that appeals to their imagination, substitute cheese for the bread of the sacrifice, hence their name of *artorytrites;* the *quartodecimans* are condemned for celebrating Easter at a date which is not that of the Church, a fate eventually shared by those who rebaptize heretics. And so it goes on through the centuries. With few exceptions, such as, for instance, the Nestorians who preserved almost in its integrity the ritual of the fifth century, heresy treated, and will always treat, the liturgy with the high-handedness with which it treats dogma. The saying of a Pope of the fifth century, who defined a dogma in terms of a liturgical formula, is a principle which has always inspired the Catholic Church: *Legem credendi statuat lex supplicandi —Let the law of prayer be also the law of belief.*[1]

In this way the liturgy reinforces apologetics and makes its contribution to the doctrine of the oneness, the apostolicity, the catholicity, and the holiness of the Church. That is why the history of the liturgy holds so important a place in the curriculum of ecclesiastical disciplines, and we no longer wonder that Bossuet should have called it 'the chief instrument of the tradition of the Church.'[2]

It has been said with perfect accuracy that from the first to the fourth century there is but one liturgy; we must, however, bear in mind what has been said concerning the initiative left to particular churches and the variations that ensued from this freedom. Nevertheless a christian journeying from East to West, from Edessa, Hierapolis, Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, to

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[1] In the circumstances in which this golden rule was laid down. Cf. D.A.C.L., at the word Celestine I, t. II, col. 2794 ff.

[2] '*Le principal instrument de la tradition de l'Eglise*' (Instr. Sur les états d'oraison, traité I, t. VI, no. i).

Rome, Carthage, Lyons, or Treves, is not taken aback by the divergences he may discover in these churches, for they only bear on matters of detail; with Abercius he finds everywhere the same faith, the sacred *ichthus* presented to him by a pure Maiden, the bread and wine which are our heavenly food. In the middle of the second century a bishop of Asia, S. Polycarp, was invited by Pope Anicetus to celebrate the Eucharist in his church. A similar custom obtained in the fourth century. When Etheria journeyed to Jerusalem, she only noted the processions, the feasts, and gatherings in the Holy Places which were peculiar to the church of the holy city; as for the rest, that is, the Mass, Baptism, or Confirmation, she makes no comment or merely says that '*all is done as at home*,' viz. in Spain.

At the end of the fourth century and during the course of the fifth, divers forces will be at work to produce more sharply defined divergences which eventually crystallize in families of national liturgies. Though this point belongs to another period we must treat of it here for fear of not conveying an accurate conception of the liturgical unity of the early centuries.

The first line of demarcation is between East and West. The difference of language and manners between these two parts of the *orbis Romanus* was bound to lead to a cleavage which time could not accentuate. By the foundation of Constantinople on the shores of the Bosphorus (A.D. 330) a powerful centre of attraction was created whose influence was bound to grow with the lapse of time, for it concentrated in itself the political life of the empire which decreased in proportion in the Eternal City and so drew into its orbit the forces of which Rome had hitherto been the seat. This political transaction was the starting-point of endless troubles for the Church. The central power was at Rome, the see of Peter. Constantinople strove gradually to arrogate it to itself. The struggle lasted for centuries and was marked by violent crises, for, after all, Rome was the see of Peter, the burying-place of S. Paul and of the most famous martyrs; in a word, it was a centre, the capital of the Church as well as of the empire. At last there came a rupture which led to a deplorable schism, the effect whereof weighed on the whole history of the Middle Ages; in fact, we ourselves still suffer from its baneful consequences.

The liturgy also felt the counter-shock. Towards the middle or the end of the third century—for reasons which have nothing to do with politics—Rome gave up the use of Greek, which had hitherto been its liturgical language, in favour of Latin. This change was fraught with heavy consequences for the unity of the liturgy. This point has been studied, but it may be that its importance has not yet been fully realized.

Other forces were at work about this period. In the fourth century the church of Jerusalem took an initiative to which we must probably ascribe the creation of the ecclesiastical cycle or liturgical year. Her example was copied in the West, where it met with no dissent. Besides Jerusalem the great Eastern churches, that is, Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus, Edessa, also exercised their respective influence and became centres of liturgical systems which we see in process of formation in the fourth century. However, it was chiefly Constantinople which, in the following centuries, sought to impose its liturgy upon the other Eastern patriarchates. In the West, Rome took the lead, for in this sphere the rôle of Milan, notwithstanding its political importance, could never be compared to that of the Eternal City. In the fourth, the fifth, and especially in the sixth century we see the Popes exerting their authority again and again in order to bring the other churches in line with the practice of Rome; in fact, they even imposed Roman rites and formulas, though they adopted often enough the customs of other churches and so gave them force of law.

To a Roman pontiff—very probably S. Damasus—scholars ascribe the idea of varying the prayers of the anaphora or canon of the Mass according to the feasts of the calendar. Until that time the cycle exercised no influence whatever upon that part of the Mass. The same theme, with divers variations, is expressed, though not without lengthy developments, in the eighth book of the *Apostolic Constitutions* : '*It is meet and just to return thanks to God, the creator of all things, for his whole creation, for the benefits lavished upon his chosen people* (Israel) ; *for having sent among men his Son, our Redeemer, who before he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies consecrated bread and wine. Wherefore, recalling to mind all these benefits, we offer to God the Father this sacrifice of bread and wine for all the faithful and for the whole Church.*'

The same idea is diversely developed in the anaphoras of Balizeh (*circ.* fifth century) ; Serapion ; Hippolytus ; and even in that of Clement of Rome. It is to the latter that S. Justin refers. It finds its inspiration in a Jewish prayer and in certain psalms of thanksgiving. This is the prayer of the daily Mass which, though its expression may vary, takes no notice of the feast, even were it Easter or Pentecost.

In the fourth, fifth, and sixth century the Roman Church gave proof of a liturgical genius which was both constructive and inventive. She composed then, in a Latin distinguished by sobriety and classical elegance, a number of collects and prefaces which were destined to be adopted by the whole of the West. The Leonine sacramentary, in which we can best study the symptoms of this gradual evolution, contains elements of the fifth, and perhaps even of the fourth century, of incalculable value and of matchless literary grace and dogmatic significance. To the old anaphora, which held itself aloof from all influence of any particular feast, a system was now substituted which was destined to prevail in northern

Italy, in Gaul, in Spain, and elsewhere. It was this modification, together with a variety of circumstances, which, in our opinion, was responsible for the several liturgical divergences which came to the surface in the Ambrosian, Gallican, and Mozarabic liturgies. Whilst the East held fast to its own formulas for Mass and sacraments, Rome accepted the principle, also admitted by Milan, Gaul, and Spain, that the formulas of Mass and Office may vary according to the diverse feasts. The formularies of Baptism and the other sacraments alone underwent no change for reasons we need not stop to explain.

This variation of formulas is the first difference, and a capital one, between the liturgy of the West which accepts it and that of the East which rejects it. The churches of Gaul and Spain which, whilst remaining united to Rome, tend, since the fifth century, and under the pressure of circumstances, to become national churches, compose for themselves each its own liturgy; thus we get a Gallican liturgy for Gaul, a Mozarabic one for Spain, and for Milan and Upper Italy—if a few local customs may be said to constitute a liturgical family—the so-called Ambrosian liturgy.

These facts belong to a period between the fourth and seventh century, but it was impossible not to refer to them if we were to explain the difference, from the liturgical point of view, between that period and the early centuries. It may be said—if we allow for a few exceptions—that previous to the fourth century there obtains a perfect liturgical unity between East and West, between Jerusalem, Ephesus, Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome on the one hand, and on the other between Rome, Africa, Gaul, Spain, and the newly converted countries. Whatever variety there may be on points of detail, there are no fundamental differences between them. This is seen by the anaphora of Hippolytus which, with its variants, was adopted by the East as well as by the West, or by that of the eighth book of the *Apostolic Constitutions* which we find in a great many ancient liturgies.

The situation was different in the fifth and sixth, and especially in the seventh century. The first great line of cleavage was between the Latin liturgy on the one hand and the Greek and Eastern liturgies on the other. This distinction was based not only on the difference of language—an important matter by itself—but on a number of factors which we need not examine here, but which have been carefully studied by liturgists and of which new ones are being daily observed. In the latter group we have to note various subdivisions: the Roman, Gallican, Mozarabic, and even the Ambrosian liturgies have each their peculiar character, tendency, and style. We need not enter further into this question; it was necessary, however, to point it out in order to throw more light upon the liturgy of the first three centuries and to put in full relief the unity which was one of its distinctive features.

It goes without saying that these divisions of the Western liturgy along national lines by no means imply that the unity of worship had been broken, for these differences do not constitute a divergence in the field of dogma. As a matter of fact there is to-day a fairly marked tendency among liturgists and archæologists to compare the Roman with other liturgies so as to show the affinities that obtain between the various families.

By reason of special circumstances and the political unity of which Rome was the centre, no such liturgical differences occurred in the first three centuries. It was necessary to stress this point, though it is a secondary one and lies outside our sphere. What is far more important, as regards the period surveyed by us, is that in this way we have been able to demonstrate—at least we hope so—the originality and unity of christian worship.

Another fact worth noting, as showing the relationship between christian worship and the Church, is their interdependence and mutual reaction. Why is a catechumen baptized? it is in order that he may become a member of the Church, for to be a member of the Church is to be incorporated in Christ, the head of the Church. If he is confirmed it is that he may receive the Holy Ghost who dwells within the Church. The sacrament of Penance restores to him the supernatural life, grace, and all the privileges forfeited by sin, and makes him once more a living member of the Church. All this was expressed in this realistic fashion: 'by apostasy and certain other sins a man is cast out of the Church; by Penance he is re-admitted.' The Eucharist is a banquet to which all the children of the Church are convened, and therein they partake of the body and blood of Christ and are made one with him. Holy Order provides the Church with her ministers and Matrimony secures the strength and continuity of the christian family.

The remaining rites do not enter less deeply into the life of the Church. A sick man is surrounded with attentions which show that the Church does not leave him to himself. In fact she is with him to the last, receives his last breath and in her burial service pays a final tribute of reverence to his mortal remains.

EPILOGUE

CERTAIN conclusions must be drawn from this necessarily brief summary of christian worship in the early centuries. Some of them have already been pointed out so that we need not insist on them. First of all we have the unity of christian worship, which is maintained amid a variety of customs and notwithstanding the great liberty that obtained in those days in regard to all such matters.

Again—whatever influences may have been at work during its formative period—its originality is obvious from the first. It is impossible to confound it with any other, were it even the Jewish worship, or not to recognize in it certain characteristic features that distinguish it—just as the Catholic worship of to-day—from every other cult.

If a comparison with our present Roman liturgy is insisted upon, we may say that what strikes us most in the worship of the early christian centuries is its simplicity and its sense of continuity or logic.

In its course through the ages christian worship, whilst preserving its essential elements, underwent important modifications, especially in the West. This is not matter for either astonishment or complaint. Certain rites, deemed necessary at certain times under given conditions, were bound to be either abolished or modified. The ritual of the catechumenate was a suitable preparation for the Baptism of adults, but from the day when all children were baptized, so that the Baptism of an adult was an exceptional occurrence, the whole of that discipline was rendered useless and had perforce to be reduced and condensed, as has been done in our present ritual of Baptism.

For similar reasons the discipline of public penance has almost wholly disappeared. But by way of compensation other departments of the liturgy have been singularly enriched. Whereas previous to the fourth century Easter and Pentecost were the only holidays, festivals have been prodigiously multiplied, so much so that to-day there is a movement—a very timid one as yet, it must be admitted—in favour of their reduction. Other functions, such as Ordination and the consecration of a church, which were at first brief and simple enough, have become most elaborate ceremonies in the course of the centuries. In some rites we can see a juxtaposition of a Gallican and Roman ritual.

The Roman liturgy of the Gelasian and Gregorian sacramentaries, that is, the liturgy used at Rome between the fifth and the seventh century, must have been a liturgy of admirable simplicity and rigorous logic.

The *cursus* (order) of the divine office for every day, though perhaps in a less degree, also bears the stamp of genius.

When the history of the Roman liturgy previous to the ninth century comes to be written we shall have one of the finest apologies in favour of the Roman Church. Newman felt this whilst as yet an Anglican, and the best liturgists daily contribute a stone to the rearing of this edifice.

The bitter attacks launched in France during the nineteenth century, against the Roman liturgy, sprang from a misunderstanding. These assaults were levelled at a liturgy that was not, properly speaking, the Roman liturgy at all. For a very curious phenomenon happened from the ninth to the twelfth century and perhaps even later. This was nothing else than a mixture or alloy of the old Roman liturgy and the Gallican liturgies. Our

Missal, and to some extent our Pontifical, our ritual, our breviary, even our martyrology, notwithstanding their title, are no longer purely Roman books, for a goodly number of Gallican, Mozarabic, or Byzantine elements have gradually permeated them. It has been proved that, with few exceptions, the dramatic, poetical, or emotional elements in our present liturgy, such as the blessing of palms and candles, the Rogations, the solemn sprinkling of Holy Water on Sunday, the feasts of the Blessed Sacrament, the Trinity, the Sacred Heart, the Immaculate Conception, the hymns, proses or sequences, the singing of the *Credo* at Mass and many other devotions, were embodied in the Roman liturgy at a late period and at times not without prolonged resistance, so much so that that great liturgist, the late Edmond Bishop, used to delight in demonstrating to his Anglican friends that the Roman genius which they were wont to take so severely to task for its emotionalism and its materialism is, on the contrary, almost puritan in its austere sobriety.

Were it not for fear of appearing to seek a cheap success in so serious a matter, one might say that in its first age the Roman liturgy is *classical*, whereas the Eastern as well as the Gallican, Mozarabic, and Celtic liturgies may be described as *romantic*, and that the Roman liturgy only altered its character under the influence of these liturgies, more particularly that of Gaul. If there are people who have no ground for complaint, it is assuredly French critics. Those of the nineteenth century, without being aware of it, fired more than once upon their own troops. However, whatever we may think on the subject, it cannot be denied that these additions have given to the Roman liturgy a composite character which was absent in its golden age, that is, from the fifth to the seventh century.

Both logic and practicability suffered by this process. De Vert endeavoured to discover beneath each rite its *raison d'être.* He carried his system to extremes ; none the less he established a few incontestable facts. Thus, for instance, the washing of the hands at a low Mass which to-day is nothing but a symbolic gesture, was a necessity at a time when the priest handled the bread and at times even the fruits and vegetables that were presented to him at the offertory. To-day this kind of oblation has ceased, but the rite remains. The epistle was read by the subdeacon from an *ambo* or platform to the right of the altar, and the gospel by a deacon to the left of the altar. At a Low Mass the priest himself reads both epistle and gospel as well as the other prayers. Nevertheless the book is carried from the right to the left, though the ceremony is no more than a reminiscence of ancient custom and of the ritual of a High Mass.

We could quote countless instances of rites which can only be understood to-day by a study of the primitive liturgy. The sacred vestments of to-day—the tunic, dalmatic, stole, cope, etc.—are purely symbolic, but originally they were for the most part Roman, being the dress of certain sections of the Roman people or the distinctive garb of certain officials. This variety of gestures and garments reminds us of the early days of the Church. For a christian, these reminiscences are not merely a satisfaction for the scholar or the archæologist in him, they likewise feed his devotion inasmuch as they remind him of the fervour of his ancestors in the faith. All these characteristics of the old Roman liturgy were also those of the whole christian liturgy in the early centuries.

This leads us to another remark, to the effect that, these vicissitudes notwithstanding, the history of the liturgy shows no trace of interrupted continuity. The surface may have changed, the groundwork remains unaltered. Most of the heretics who separated themselves from the Church similarly rejected her liturgy, were it only in part. In this they were logical, for '*the law of prayer is also the law of faith*.' It is impossible, without being taxed either with hypocrisy or lack of logic, to reject the dogmas of a religion whilst retaining its ritual. The result would be a body without a soul. It is regrettable if there are people who hold such opinions to-day, for they are mistaken.

It is otherwise for the children of the Church. The changes we have described happened by degrees, in the course of many centuries, and as the result of various circumstances. The evolution came about progressively and without disturbance; the spirit, the faith that quickens the liturgy, is always the same.

Another remark, which has been made already but which we must stress, concerns the efficaciousness of christian worship, that is, its reaction upon the life of christians. There can be no doubt that it was one of the chief contributing causes of the holiness and intense interior life which were so distinctive a feature of that early period—one fully acknowledged by impartial historians. None kept aloof from this influence. Even the most obstinate individualists—for instance Clement of Alexandria, or Origen, who at times stray pretty far whilst following some misleading mystical trail of their own—do not for a moment suggest or think that their 'gnostic' may keep away from public worship or improvise for himself a devotional life distinct from that of the Church. For that life is devotion to Christ. Christian worship has no other aim than to express the sentiments of adoration, gratitude, and love which fill the heart of every true christian. Baptism, Penance, prayer in all its forms, serve no other purpose than that of offering such homage to him and through him to God his Father, in the Holy Ghost.

Hence also it may happen that the faith of the Church, I mean the faith of the christian people, may be put, at times, in a clearer light by a study of the liturgy and the practices of popular piety than by theological speculation. This is the very thesis recently propounded by an eminent divine. Not infrequently the faith of the people was ahead of speculation, and at times, as in the third century, there was even disagreement between it and speculative theology.[1]

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[1] Cf. Lebreton, *La foi du baptême*, in *Recherches de science religieuse*, 1918; *La prière dans l'Eglise primitive*, *ib.* 1924; *Le désaccord de la foi populaire et de la théologie savante*, *Revue d'hist. ecclés.*, 1923.

APPENDIX

PAGAN MYSTERIES AND CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

OF late years this question has been the object of lively discussion. Certain writers claim to have discovered pagan influences in S. Paul, S. John, and in christian dogma and worship. Here we can only give a few hints for the guidance of those who are less well informed on the point and refer those who wish to examine the problem more thoroughly to certain books where they will find the necessary information.

1. In the opening pages of this book we saw that if any outside influence at all was at work in the formation of the primitive liturgy, it was that of the Jewish worship. This influence—which was preponderant—is explained by the history of christian beginnings and is founded on numerous and irrefutable facts. Here we are not in the domain of hypothesis—it is not a question of some more or less ingenious comparisons but of positive analogies and facts easily controlled.

Now this influence once granted—with all its consequences—would leave but little room, at least during the primitive era, for the hypothesis of pagan infiltrations as propounded by the writers we have in mind.

2. The influence of Greco-Roman speech, philosophy and civilization upon christianity is another factor explained by history, which we do not seek to deny but which must be reduced to its true proportions.

3. It is more difficult to grant the influence of paganism upon our worship. There are serious objections to it from the start. If there is one fact that is well established it is the horror the early christians felt towards paganism. In this respect they were at one with the Jews. The analogies observable between the pagan mysteries and the Eucharist, Baptism, and other sacraments are not a decisive proof. We do not claim for

christianity a monopoly of the ideas of sacrifice, expiation, redemption or the ritual of initiation, purification, illumination, etc. Ideas and rites of this kind are met with in a great many religions, wide apart in space and time and which most certainly have had no influence upon one another. That in certain pagan religions there were sacrifices, a ritual of theophagia and omophagia and other ceremonies recalling those of the christian liturgy, we are ready to grant, but on a closer examination these analogies are seen to be more specious than real. This is true of Orphism, to give only one instance, as anyone may see by studying recently-published books on the subject.[1]

4. If some scholars, such as Hatch, Rietzenstein, Bousset, G. P. Wetter, Rendel Harris, Salomon Reinach, Frazer and others, affirm that christianity borrowed from paganism, others, just as well informed but more cautious, have shown the weakness of the foundations on which these hypotheses rest. We may add that some of the critics are discredited by their very exaggerations. For instance, P. Hochart, who sees the cross, the crucifix, the monogram of Christ and other christian emblems in paganism, or more recently Isidore Levy, who looks for the origin of christianity in the legend of Pythagoras (Cf. *Revue Biblique*, Jan. 1929, p. 135 ff), and Autran, who sees an analogy between the 'sacred' hawk and the Holy Ghost. Certain hypotheses of Rendel Harris, Frazer and Salomon Reinach are equally fantastic.

5. It should also be noted that even where such loans can be proved, they are small in number and of little consequence. This applies to certain marriage and funeral customs, the division of the civil year, the names of the months and the days of the week, the coincidence of the dates of certain holidays, etc.

6. Lastly it may be useful to note that most of these borrowings are of later date than the period here under review. They belong to the fourth century—even to subsequent centuries—for instance, triduums, novenas, the procession of 2 February and other days, the funeral services of the third, seventh, ninth and thirtieth day, the litany of 25 April, the feast of 1 August,

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[1] Cf. André Boulanger, *Orphée, rapports de l'Orphisme et du Christianisme*, Paris, 1925. Aug. Diès, *Bulletin critique d'histoire de la philosophie grecque*, *Revue des sciences relig.*, July 1928, p. 431 ff.

etc.—in other words, to a period of diminished strictness because it was thought that by then paganism had but little hold upon men's souls.

7. Best of all that which is brought home to us by a study of the liturgy of the early centuries in regard to the feelings of the christians of those days is their coldness, their antipathy to, nay, their hatred of, paganism. Behind every idol they see a devil; water, salt, oil and other elements are exorcised because they belong to a world over which the evil spirits exercise their tyranny; the renunciation of Satan, his works and his pomps, and the whole of the rites and ceremonies of the catechumenate and those of Baptism are obviously instituted for a pagan adult rather than for a convert from Judaism; in 'the prayer of the faithful' supplication is made for the pagans, so that 'forsaking their idols, they may worship the one, true and living God and his only Son, Jesus Christ.'

Renan, who was sufficiently informed concerning christian origins to avoid mistakes in regard to pagan influences, attributed these so-called borrowings to the gnostics. According to him they were responsible for the adoption of some pagan customs by the christians. But his assertion rests on no solid argument.

Among the chief supporters of the theory of pagan influences we may quote Wilh. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, Göttingen, 1913 and 1921; R. Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterien Religionen*, Leipzig, 1910; G. Réville, A. Dieterich, W. Soltau, C. Clemen, etc. Loisy, in his *Les Mystères païens et le mystère chrétien*, Paris, 1910, is far more moderate than the above and only grants to the pagan mysteries a very indirect influence upon the christian mystery. Cf. however, Lagrange, *Revue Biblique*, 1 July, 1920, p. 420 ff., where this thesis, even thus reduced, is discussed.

Cf. Lagrange, *Attis et le Christianisme*, *Revue biblique*, 1919, pp. 419, 480, and 1927, pp. 561–566.

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